THE JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

Vol.1 No.4 $1.50

lilith

e first woman, said to Adam,
man: "We are both equal
we both came from the earth."

KARATE!

2451 Ridge Rd.
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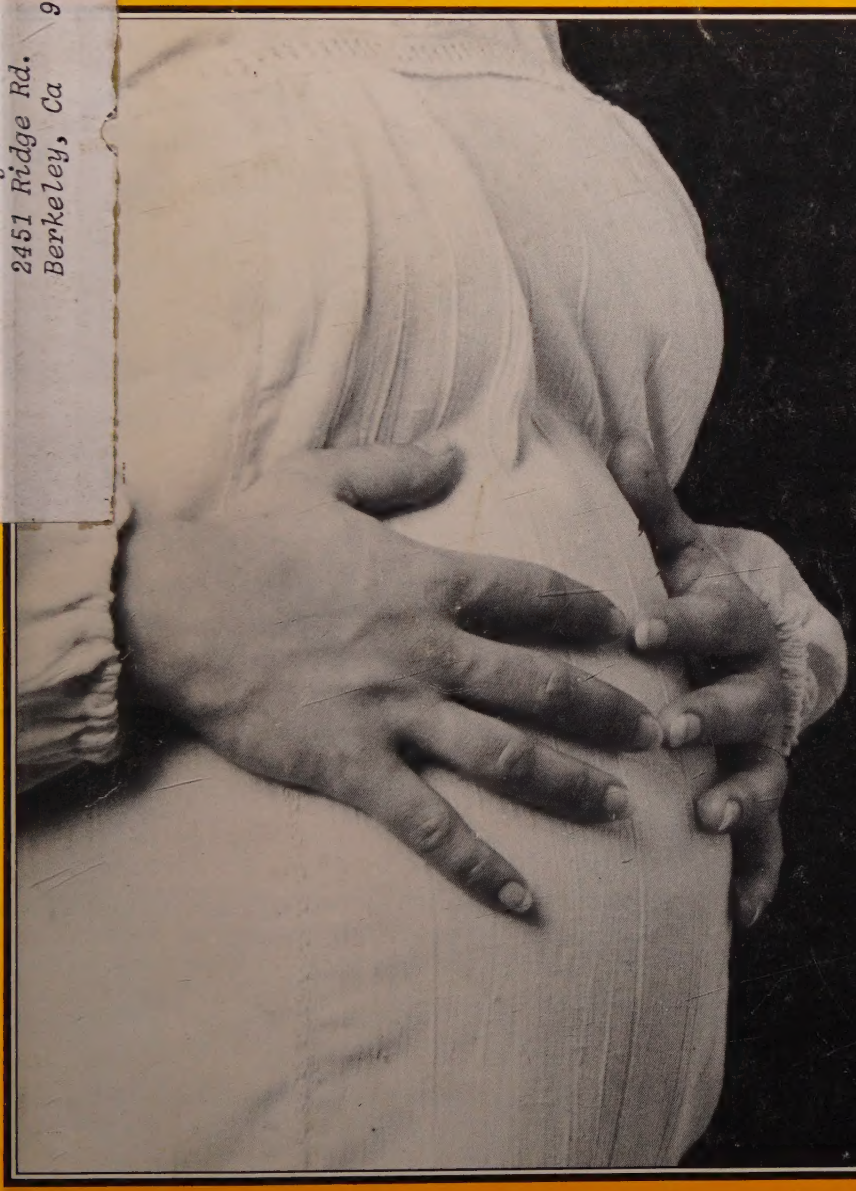


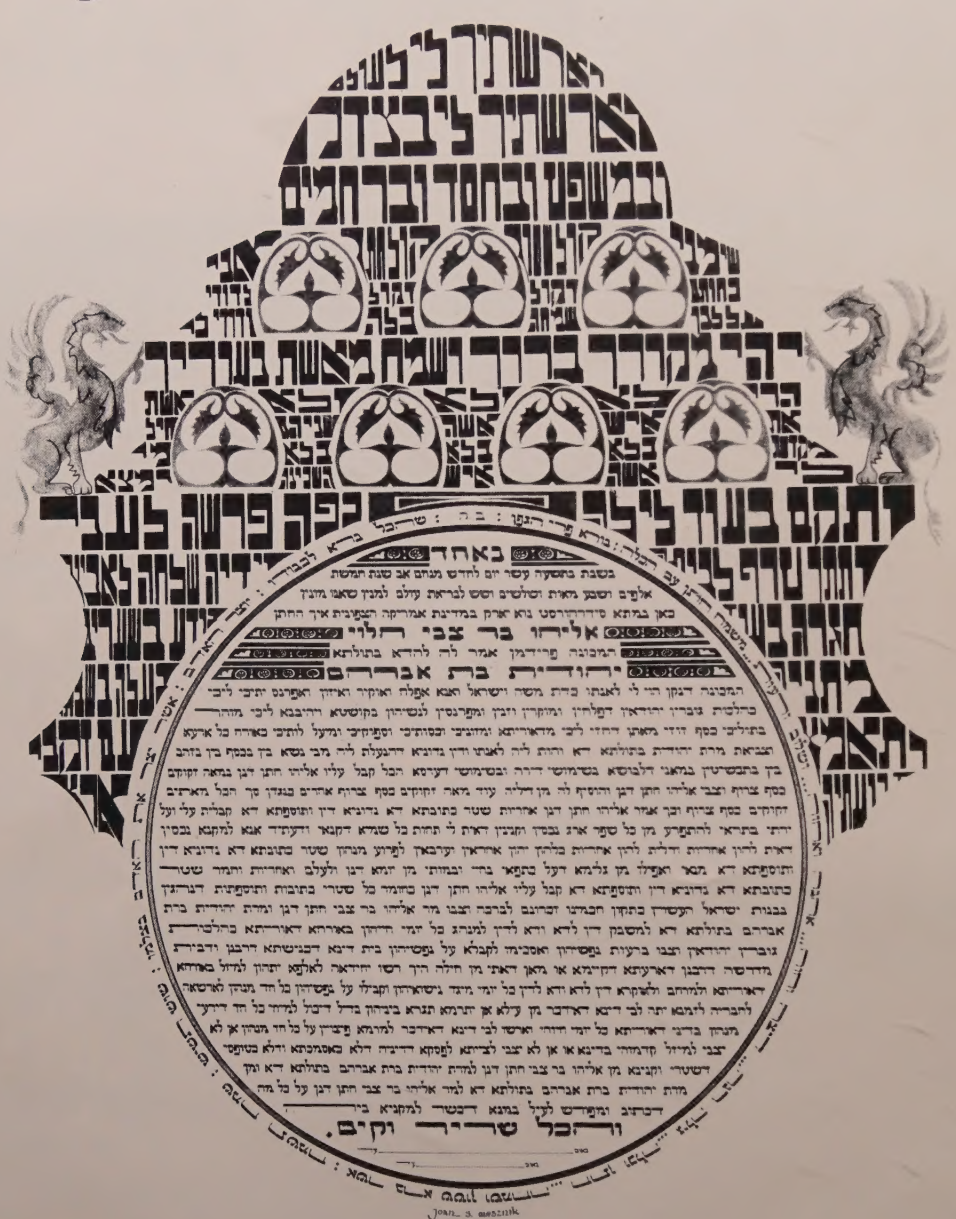
Why Jewish Leaders Want Jewish Women To "Be Fruitful and Multiply"

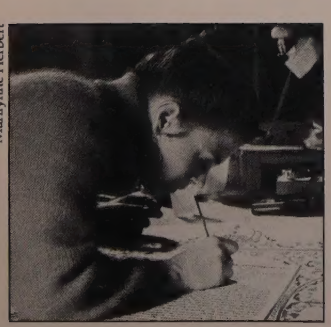
PLUS: Are Israeli Women Losing their Rights Battle?

The First Prayerbook Where God is Female

Marriage Contracts

by Joan S. Mesznik





Marilynne Herbert

Joan Mesznik, a 32-year-old calligrapher and ceramicist, has chosen the *ketubah*, the Je
ish marriage contract, to express herself as artist and Jew. The *ketubah* is one of the few Je
ish documents a woman is permitted to write under Jewish law.

One example of her work (pictured above) is based on a 17th-century Italian Jewish wedd
ring; the calligraphy of the contract forms a ring capped by a synagogue or house.

A *ketubah* usually follows a standard text, though centuries before the women's move
ment rediscovered the marriage contract, Jewish couples added individualized clauses to m
their own needs. Ms. Mesznik hopes that more couples will want to create personalized *ketub*
but "even the most agnostic couples turn traditional when it comes to a *ketubah*."

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hy Jewish Leaders Want
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e current panic by communal leaders over
ore Jews having fewer children is more than co-
idental, since the discovery of the demographic
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rom Dallas Children's Essays

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enahem Begin, groups women together with
ldren as beings who must be protected—
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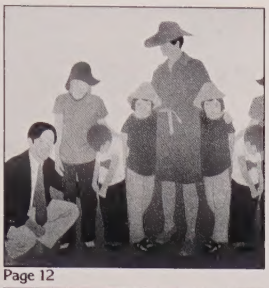
NOT an Equal Opportunity
mployer

Amy Stone

nation-wide (U.S.) study of professionals in
vish community service documents what wo-
n have long sensed—that in social work, fund-
sing and administration, the men lead and
women follow—far behind.



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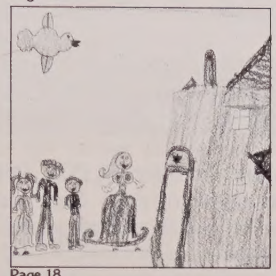

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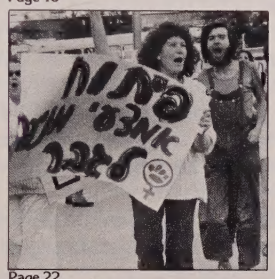

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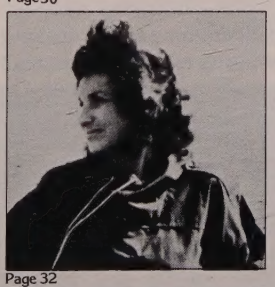

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Selections from a Prayerbook Where God's Image is Female

by Naomi Janowitz and Maggie Wenig

Woman and man may both have been created in God's image, but the God of the traditional prayerbooks is strictly male. In the new Sabbath prayerbook written by two members of the Brown University Women's Minyan, the God language is female and is inspired by women's experience.

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Karate: Throwing Off the "Pushover" Stereotype

by Chana Forse

Jewish women, many of them Orthodox, are studying this martial art because "the Torah wants us to lead healthy and disciplined lives... and emphasizes hard work as the route to understanding."

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Lilith Interview: Esther Broner

by Shebar Windstone

In a revealing interview, poet and novelist Esther Broner talks about rediscovering our mothers... the Jewish-Black rupture...how patriarchal Judaism excluded—but did not demean—women ...how women writers were told they "couldn't handle men"...feeling more and more sensual under the Israeli sun...the growth of anti-Semitism...and much more.

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Lilith welcomes articles, fiction, poetry, biography, drama, children's stories, criticism, photos and original art work. Please include one-sentence biographical identification, address and phone number. Manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the page. Complete guidelines are available on request. For acknowledgement of receipt, please enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard. For return of manuscripts, enclose an SASE. Lilith Publications, Inc., 250 West 57 St. New York, NY 10019.

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vish women pressured to be pregnant—P.12 (Photo: Bill Ashe). Karateist Lillian Andron moves up and away from the woman-as-pushover myth-P. 30 (Photo: David S. Green).

From the Editors

This issue marks the completion of LILITH's first year of publication, although the first four quarterly issues took more than a calendar year to produce. This milestone seems an appropriate time to talk about how the magazine was created and how it now operates.

We are a group of Jewish women, mostly in our thirties, comprising a range of politics, lifestyles and backgrounds. Most of us have worked in writing and editing—for magazines, books, newspapers, TV, films. Some of us are single, some are married, one of us has children. We range in our Jewish identification from traditional to secular—with all gradations in between—and have all participated in a variety of Jewish communal activities. We are committed to the creative survival of the Jewish people, and of Israel, and to the equality and advancement of Jewish women and of all womankind.

Our process of working together has evolved over the past year, and during the three-year gestation period that preceded the premiere issue. We make all editorial decisions together, by discussion and compromise and, if necessary, by vote. All of us—with the generous help of friends and student interns—do the clerical work (the "housekeeping") necessary to keep the magazine going.

Although we trust that the form and the content don't suggest it, LILITH is published on a shoestring. The bills are paid partly by subscription money. The rest of our income for this year consisted of small foundation grants, some advertising revenue, and tax-deductible gifts.

Neither the editors nor other staffers are on salary, nor are our authors paid—yet—although we are committed in principle to paying for all the time and talent now being contributed.

Our production costs—typesetting, printing, mailing—use up almost the whole of our six-dollar annual subscription price. Other expenses, pared to the bone, include our one-room office, which we moved into last summer after years of working out of each other's living rooms and bedrooms, and once even out of a walk-in closet!

From a charter subscription list of 1200, we have grown to over 5000 subscribers. And sold 5000 single copies of Issue 3. Bookstores and newsstands across the country are beginning to order LILITH. What we need, of course, are even more subscriptions, the lifeblood of the magazine.

Please help:

•Renew subscriptions early (for two or three years, if possible, to save us the expense of renewal letters and to save you some money also).

•Give gift subscriptions of LILITH.

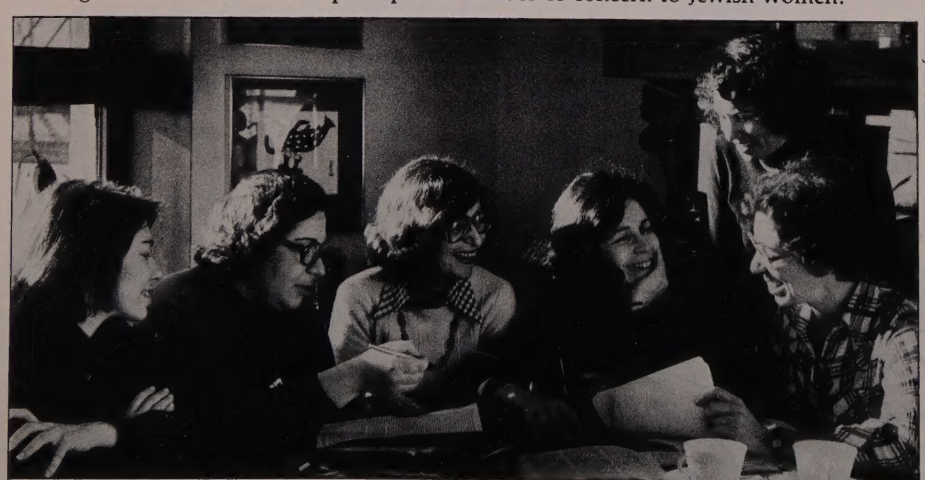
•Send us the names and addresses (with ZIP) of friends who might not know about the magazine but who should.

•Tell us about anyone with a product or service to sell, and we'll inform her/him of our low advertising rates.

•Let us know the name and address of any bookstores or newsstands in your area that you'd like to see carry LILITH.

We need your support. If you can make a large or small gift to the magazine (tax-deductible, of course), please help. Your gift will also help us to get matching funds from foundations.

We welcome your suggestions, your participation, your tax-deductible contributions and your continuing support of the only independent magazine speaking out on issues of concern to Jewish women.



Marilynne Herbert

Lilith staff (*l. to r.*): Miriam Hipsh, Aviva Cantor, Ethel C. Fenig, Susan Weidman Schneider, Barbara Taff, Amy Stone.

Lilith

Lilith is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve, who insisted on equality with Adam.

After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her "Lilith." Adam said, "You are fit to be below me and I above you." Lilith said, "We are both equal because we both come from the earth." (From the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, 23a-b)

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Debbie Weissman
Women's Action Alliance

Letters

We hope that readers will not only share their views with LILITH's editors and readers in the form of Letters to the Editor, but will also submit their opinions in longer form. The editors especially welcome experiential articles about how we are living today as Jewish women—our struggles, lifestyles, victories. These articles can be in the form of transcribed oral history, journals, etc.

o The Editor:

I saw Rachel Adler's article in "The Ways We Are" section of the Winter 76/77 LILITH, and I truly empathize with her introduction to feminism. When my own father died I insisted on my right to personally say *kaddish* for him—and I did so for the full year.

But I had been indoctrinated into Orthodox Jewry—with its many contradictions—by my grandfather. He loved to pick me up and put me on a table where I could show off for his elderly friends by reciting the Hebrew prayers he had taught me. But when the service began, I was sent up to the balcony.

The continued strength of our religion depends upon its ability to include all our people.

I would appreciate your letting Ms. Adler know how much I enjoyed her article.

Bella S. Abzug
New York NY

I am currently a subscriber to your magazine but would like to order subscriptions for three different synagogue libraries to whom my sister and I are donating a section of books and magazines in memory of our mother who died a year ago. Many of the books we are donating have been gotten from advertisements in LILITH.

My sister and I said *kaddish* for our mother for eleven months in these synagogues, and we both thought that this would be an appropriate gift to give them in her name—especially since she had been a librarian. Our experiences during this year were the most enlightening experiences of our lives. My sister has her Ph.D in Political Science, and I am presently working on my dissertation on Women and Judaism for my doctorate in Sociology. Since our work caused us to travel extensively throughout the United States during the year, we encountered quite a bit of discrimination and suffered frustration and humiliation in many different situations. Most of our problems arose from praying in Orthodox synagogues—which were in many communities the only synagogues offering daily minyans. But equally frustrating experiences were encountered in Conservative synagogues, as well—where overly-zealous men thought it necessary to protect their innocent daily *minyan*-goers from the intrusion of female worshippers.

Greta Weiner
Atlanta GA

"The continued strength of our religion depends upon its ability to include all our people."

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed reading the article on the Jewish Theological Seminary ("Gentlemen's Agreement," Spring/Summer 77), and I commend you and the author [Amy Stone] for its publication. I am in agreement with your position.

Rabbi Stanley Rabinowitz
President, The Rabbinical Assembly
Washington DC

[The article dealt with accepting women as rabbinical students and ordaining them as Conservative rabbis.—*Ed.*]

Dear Editor:

I purchased a copy of the Spring/Summer issue of LILITH and read the article on the Seminary with interest. With all good wishes.

Gerson D. Cohen
Chancellor, Jewish Theological
Seminary of America
New York NY

Dear Editor:

I commend Ms. Amy Stone for her fine presentation of the issue involved.

David C. Kogen
Vice-Chancellor, JTS
New York NY

Dear Editor:

I read the article—as well as the rest of the issue—very attentively, and would like to extend my congratulations to you and your staff for your endeavors in LILITH.

Gordon Tucker
New York NY

Dear Editors:

What your article on women rabbis might have said a bit more clearly is that this issue—and perhaps the whole question of equal rights and responsibilities for women in Judaism—is essentially a problem for the Conservative movement and its ideology. The Reform Jews, after some faltering, are making good progress in living up to their pioneering commitment to the equality of women in Judaism. The Orthodox (Blu Greenberg and other persuasive pleaders to the contrary) seem pretty well determined to make no changes—and with everyone these days having an anxious eye cocked to the critic on the right, this seems unlikely to change.

The Conservative Jews are now stuck with their preachment of many years that *halachah* (Jewish law) can change to meet the needs of the time though such change should come through appropriate "*halachic*" procedures. Then why should not Conservative "*halachah*" change to accommodate women's equality? The answer seems clear to the Reform Jews, many of the Orthodox and some Conservative Jews. Such an act, for all the intelligent legalisms used to support it, will clearly mark Conservative Judaism and its "*halachah*" as a variety of Reform Judaism of a traditionalist bent, to be sure and not merely as a modernizing stream of authentic *halachic* development as maintained in unbroken rabbinic succession by contemporary Orthodoxy.

I assume the Conservative Movement will eventually get around to ordaining women. They have too much good sense and appreciation for Jewish women not to. And it is a well established pattern for the

Reform Jews to do the experimenting, live with the successes and failures, and then for the Conservative Jews to come along and do it "right."

Gene Borowitz
Editor, *Sh'ma*
Port Washington NY

Thanks for LILITH. My husband and I feel so lonely in San Diego—and, as a result of sexist practices and attitudes, have left the Conservative movement and joined the Reform.

Arlene Saidman
San Diego CA

Dear Friends:

I went to our Conservative synagogue on Simchat Torah night more for my children (4 and 2½) than for myself. "Who will carry the Torah?" our daughter wanted to know. "Oh, I don't know," I told her. "Probably some of the men from the shul."

Much to our surprise, after some of the men had had their turn to carry the Torah, a few women were allowed the privilege—and then more, and then more. As I reached out to touch the first Torah brought near me by a woman, there were tears in my eyes. And then it was my turn.

There are no words to describe the experience of holding and carrying the Torah for the first time. The joy, the triumph, the rage at having been denied such an experience, the rightness of dancing with the Torah in one hand and my daughter's hand in the other. So many feelings—so many thoughts. Our G-d and G-d of our Mothers meant all people to experience the Torah—not just listening to some men reading it—but touching, feeling, holding the living Torah—the same Torah which was given to all people.

Women were never meant to be excluded from Judaism. Thank you for keeping other women like myself in touch with each other and aware of each other's efforts.

Ellen Ann Shapiro Hofstetter
Laurelton NY

Dear Editors:

This is in the nature of a fan letter about your Spring/Summer 77 issue of LILITH. It is a wonderful issue with fine articles and beautiful illustrations. I think you reached the high point. What more is there to say? The women do it again!

Ann G. Wolfe
National Program Staff
American Jewish Committee
New York NY

Dear Editors:

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of LILITH. I found it very interesting. Every good wish for success.

Robert Gordis
Editor, *Judaism*
New York NY

"...the rightness of dancing with the Torah in one hand and my daughter's hand in the other."

Dear Editors:

I really fail to understand how accepting ads about "vibrators" enhances your image in any way (Classified section, Winter 76/77). In fact, it holds you up to ridicule and will tend to make non-committed readers "laugh you off." I don't argue with the fact that Jewish women may use vibrators for sexual enjoyment, but I hardly think that advertisements for these and other similar products belong in a magazine of this nature.

If you want to be taken seriously by the Jewish establishment, it might be intelligent to use a bit of discretion. You might try to think about the image you are projecting before you accept even much needed funds from this and similar advertisers. I am rather disappointed. I sent a subscription to the principal of my daughter's day school, and I think after looking at the advertising page, he will simply dismiss your magazine as a serious vehicle. You don't see *Commentary* Magazine or *Atlantic Monthly* accepting ads that are unsuitable for their image.

Margaret Charytan
New Rochelle NY

Dear Editor:

The remaining board members of the Jewish Feminist Organization have decided to clear up our financial accounts. There is a small amount of money in our checking account which we have decided to contribute to selected projects which further the cause of Jewish feminism. Obviously, LILITH magazine has been very important to all of us, and we hope that this small contribution to your venture will help in some way, albeit only a drop in the bucket.

Anne Mintz
New York NY

Dear Editor:

I would be very grateful to you if you might send me the address or tell me how I might contact the author of "How Was This Passover Different from All Other Passovers?" (Spring/Summer 77). As an avid collector of the Passover Haggadah—with some 1,300 different editions in my library—I am anxious to seek from her the sources where I might be able to purchase some of the Haggadahs she listed in her article.

Maurie H. Orodenker
Philadelphia PA

[We will forward your letter to the author. This is also a good opportunity to call attention to our inadvertent omission of her complete name, Reena Sigman Friedman, from the by-line of her article.—*Ed.*]

Dear Editors:

I was surprised to read that Jane She man is acting *chairman* of the U.J.A. Your Women's Leadership Cabinet. A magazi such as LILITH should use only nonsexi terms. Please, in future issues, refer to wor en in leadership positions as "chairperson or "chairwomen."

Gloria Finkelstein Golbe
Denver C

[It would be misleading to our readers use a title of our creation, however mu we would like to do so, when the person belongs to has chosen to be identified b another title, however sexist. If we chang the title to a nonsexist one, our reade might be led to believe that the level of co sciousness of both the person and the ins tution she works for is higher than it actual is. Please see letter below.—*Ed.*]

"Most [observant] women are only able to be Jews in private life and not within the community setting of shul."

Dear Editors:

Thank you so much for the article o the Young Women's Leadership Cabinet the Spring/Summer 77 edition of LILITH On the whole, I found the article amusin as well as informative. However, I foun one grave omission—you failed to mentio the name of Barbara Faske's father.

Jane Sherma
Chairma
Young Women's Leadership Cabin
United Jewish Appe
Birmingham M

Dear Editors:

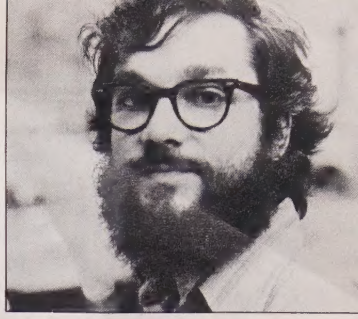
As one of the two seniors in Jewish jou nalism and as a dues-paying member of th World Union of Jewish Journalists, I hearti second your question, where are the Jewis journalists? (reported on in *Kol Isha* Spring/Summer 77).

I don't know how or by whom th American delegates to the Jerusalem confe ence were chosen. I'm a member of th American Jewish Press Association, whic includes virtually all of the Jewish weeklie and I know of no election or any action choose delegates to the conference....Ju from a casual check of the mastheads of th papers I regularly receive, I count 7 women serving as publishers, co-publisher editors or managing editors of 9 differe papers.

Bernard Post
Editor, *Jewish Dige*
Oceanside N

Dear Lilith:

I think the article on Jewish women an sex ("In a *Coma*! I thought she was *Jewish* Spring/Summer 77) presented only half th



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story. While there seems to be an active myth in jokes about sexually unresponsive Jewish women, there is also a more "serious" one which proclaims us to be earthy, sensual, buxom. I cannot tell whether this latter portrayal comes more from non-Jewish men. For example, Thomas Wolfe writes in *Of Time And the River* (1935): "The Jewish women were as old as nature and as round as the earth: they had a curve in them....Female, fertile, yolky, fruitful as the earth and ready for the plow, they offered to the famished wanderer...escape and surcease of the handsome barren women...."

Laura Cohen
Albany NY

"There is a more 'serious' myth proclaiming Jewish women to be earthy, sensual, buxom."

This article should never have been written, let alone printed in LILITH. LILITH should be dedicated to the glories, to the aspirations, to the accomplishments, to the growth of women—as is the article on Beruriah (which should have been written by a woman). Too much space in a women's magazine has been devoted to understanding the man's position.

That men publicly discuss, let alone "joke" about the intimacies of their relations with women is only due to their crassness. Yet non-Jewish men do not "joke" about their women this way. To me, this slander does not reflect a difference in sexual relations but in moral standards. If there is anything to understand about Jewish men from these "jokes" it is their lack of values and their lack of respect.

The author tries to understand these men from their current social situation, and thus relieves them of their responsibility. Yet she defends (as if guilty) Jewish women from a historical basis. Yes, Jewish life *has* been geared to survival. But certainly present reality is that Jews *do* have their fill of pleasure. The author should go to Jewish weddings and Bar Mitzvahs and restaurants to see Jews indulge.

In any case, she should tell us the truth about things that would nourish us as Jewish women.

Sandy (last name withheld on request)
Brooklyn NY

Hello Sisters,

As a woman just now starting to touch the culture and religion that has made me and has been me for generations, I am soaking up anything I read about my people. As a feminist who will not accept myths that harm me, I am joyous to have the perspectives of other Jewish womyn. Thank you for the magazine.

Karen Belford
Scotts Valley CA

"The author should go to Jewish weddings and Bar mitzvahs and restaurants to see Jews indulge."

Dear Editor:

Your magazine offers women an opportunity to discuss how we are dealing with our Jewishness. One aspect of my life, and possibly others', hasn't yet been discussed. Both my parents are Jewish in a cultural sense. Although they sent me to Sunday school for a short time, I had no serious religious training and I can't speak Hebrew. Nevertheless, I have been subjected to anti-Semitism since elementary school.

I tried to hide my Jewishness, to deny it and to despise it. I attempted to assimilate into a WASP society, but I was still called a kike and even without knowing its meaning, it hurt as if I'd been stabbed in the heart. I suffer because I am a Jew....

I ask myself again and again if it pays to be a Jew. There is no answer because there is no choice, but there is even less benefit for a Jew without a religious community. I cannot escape from my past—my heritage. The community influence provides some feelings of belongingness without the religious aspect, but to provide basic religious training at this stage of life would be the greatest satisfaction.

To be able to state proudly and with knowledge that I am a Jew is the first step. Then I can proceed, almost to an affluent level, and argue what the 20th century role of Jewish woman should be. This argument is a luxury for those who have had religious training and builds walls in front of those who have not and yet who still experience the pain of their Jewishness—no matter what their sex.

Deborah Rechnitz
Stamford CT

Dear Lilith:

What, if anything is happening or being started for Orthodox women in Brooklyn? We need you; we need help. As an ex-Manhattanite, expatriated here (by choice) a year ago, I feel, by contrast, the extra oppression old-line Orthodox women undergo, yet I can't imagine being other than Orthodox in my observance; so I'm presently totally non-observant and feeling the lack.

I would be happy to join other women who feel like I do out here if I could find them, but, alas, the ones who are *frum* (observant) all seem contented with their lot and either don't understand what I'm talking about or become elaborately defensive about why Orthodox men must be permitted to behave the way they do toward women and say we women must be understanding and sympathetic toward them.

The favorite spot in all shuls for men to stand and chat loudly during *davening*—don't tell me this is an accident—is right front of the *mechitzah* (partition betwe the sexes) opening, thus making it impos ble for us to hear the service at all. In m shuls with a fully curtained *mechitzah* already cannot see the *davening*. Requests by me, not the other women, who acce this—to move or lower their voices, matter how politely uttered are met by e raged replies and even insults. Few wom come to *daven* and those who do give trying to follow the service after awhile a just chat with others in the women's sectio This adds to the impossibility of followi the service or *davening* and makes them convenient target for the men, who becor so angry at my polite request not to ta loudly right in front of the *mechitzah* during *davening*.

What to do? Most *frum* women here c only express their Yiddishkeit at home *balabostes* and mothers; they are only ab to be Jews in private life and not within t community setting of shul. I sometim think this is a concerted if not conscio tactic chosen by men to keep women fro wanting to come to shul which men seem regard as a sort of private men's club. A if a lone woman (me) wants to *dav* during the week at shul, heaven protect he She'll be the object of continual baleful a insulting glares, men's dumping *tefillin* a *tallis* cases, coats and briefcases in the wor en's section all during *davening* (right ne to her), and curious prying glances wh other tactics fail.

Well, I got all that off my chest. Than for being there to be a shoulder.

Laea Bat-Sa
Brooklyn N

Dear Editor:

I have just finished reading a condense version of Aviva Cantor's *The Lilith Que tion* in an old copy of *Jewish Digest*. T article was quite an eye-opener. Althoug am a traditionally-oriented Jew, I see t need for parity between Jewish men a women. And if Judaism is to experience a other period of Enlightenment, then the ro of the Jewish woman must be reevaluate and affirmatively acted upon for the sake humane fairness and the unity of the Jewi People.

Avram Heitz
Attica N

To the Editors:

It always feels emotionally and intelle tually good to read a magazine in whi people say what I've been thinking and fe ing, but they say it in a way I never coul *KOL HA KAVOD! L'SHANIN RABI* When you send the sub to my mother, cou you please back order it so she'll get the fi two issues? Wishing you much success.

Sheina L. Lerm
Toronto, Ontar

(Contd. on Page 4

Kol Ishah

Ishah, literally, woman's voice. Traditionally, voice of the Jewish woman was not allowed to heard in public lest it arouse men. Thus women e silenced. But no more. The voices of women breaking through the silence of centuries to speak ach other and to the community at large of what appening in their lives. These pages are open ews of Jewish women's actions, providing the ortunity for women's voices to be heard by all.

servative Commission To ecide on Admission of Women to Seminary

ether women will be ordained as rvative rabbis in the near future may e determined by a commission of men and three women, which met for st time in December.

ck in May, Gerson Cohen, Chancel- the Jewish Theological Seminary, to head a commission to study the women as spiritual leaders in Con- ve Judaism "only if all activity" on ue of Conservative women rabbis "is ded for two years."

e Rabbinical Assembly, the rabbinical ation of the Conservative movement, to the freeze as part of a compromise explosive issue of women rabbis. lay, the RA's annual convention had orn over a resolution that encouraged vish Theological Seminary to admit n to its Rabbinical School and directed A's Membership Committee to con- ualified candidates regardless of sex. solution was dropped in favor of the ssion.

spite the six-month delay in naming mmission, Chancellor Cohen (whose us position on the Seminary's ordaining women was "For the present and foreseeable future, no") seems to have selected a group, in his own words, "sufficiently dispassionate so that the outcome of its deliberations would not be predictable in advance."

Some early criticism from those hoping for change centers on the small number of women on the commission and the lack of a Jewish feminist commission member with scholarly credentials.

Two commission members who have supported ordaining Conservative women rabbis are Rabbi Seymour Siegel of New York, Professor of Theology at the Seminary, and Rabbi Fishel Pearlmutter of Toledo, Ohio, who introduced the motion at the Rabbinical Assembly for acceptance of women into the RA.

Commission member Francine Klagsbrun of New York is also likely to be supportive of change. Klagsbrun, who is a graduate of the Seminary College of Jewish Studies-Teachers Institute and is on the board of the Seminary's Melton Research Center, edited *The First Ms. Reader* and *Free to Be You and Me.*

Among those on the commission considered traditionalists are Haim Z. Dimitrovsky of New York, Professor of Talmud at the Seminary; Rivka Harris of Evanston, Ill., Professor of Assyriology at Northwestern University; and Rabbi Wilfred Shuchat of Westmount, Quebec, who opposed the resolution on women rabbis at the RA Convention.

Also named to the commission were Milton Himmelfarb of New York, co-editor of the *American Jewish Year Book,* who has been characterized as a traditionalist who seems to have an open mind on many traditional positions; Norman Redlich of New York, Dean of New York University Law School, member of the Seminary board of overseers, a civil libertarian and a supporter of the Rabbinical Assembly's previous decisions to count women in the *minyan* and permit women to read from the Torah during services; Victor Goodhill of Los Angeles, chairman of the board of overseers of the University of Judaism, the Seminary's West Coast school, a member of the Seminary board of overseers and Professor of Ear Surgery at UCLA.

Other commission members are Marion Siner Gordon of Royal Palm Beach, Fla., a lawyer who served as Assistant Attorney General of New York State in the civil rights field from 1959 to 1970; National President of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism from 1950 to 1954; National Chairman of the Torah Fund Campaign, the Women's League scholarship fund for the Seminary; and one-time overseer of the Seminary; Elijah Schochet of Canoga Park, Calif., Professor of Jewish Codes at the University of Judaism and rabbi of a congregation which counts women in the *minyan* and allows women to read from the Torah during services; and Harry Plotkin of Washington, D.C., a lawyer who is a financial contributor to the Seminary.

Chancellor Cohen named Rabbi Gordon Tucker as executive director to the commission. Tucker, who is Instructor in Philosophies of Judaism and Assistant to the Chancellor, has said, "The best of all possible worlds right now would be to have women admitted to the Rabbinical School but not ordained."

[Ed. note: *In establishing the Commission, Chancellor Cohen said that "testimony from persons not on the Commission will be welcome."*

The question of ordination of women is an issue that affects Klal Israel (*the entire Jewish people*) *and the quality of Jewish life.*

Members of the Commission should be made aware that there is a large body of opinion among North American Jewry that supports the admission of women to the JTS Rabbinical school. People should communicate their "testimony" to Chancellor Cohen and Commission members by letter or in person. Letters can be sent c/o the Seminary, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027.

Members and leaders of synagogues and organizations—particularly Jewish women's organizations, local and national—

should put this question on their agendas for discussion and for adoption of resolutions, and should see that the Commission is aware of these grass-roots actions.

Please inform the Kol Ishah column of responses you receive on your communications to Commission members on the question of women rabbis at the Seminary.]

The commission is scheduled to give a progress report to the Rabbinical Assembly Executive Council in spring 1978 and present its final report and recommendations at the Rabbinical Assembly's 1979 convention.

—Amy Stone

More Female Cantors and Rabbis in Pulpits

Meanwhile, progress in the ambivalent zone can be seen with recent Jewish Theological Seminary graduate Carol Glass taking on the responsibilities of an assistant rabbi at Adath Jeshurun, the only Conservative congregation within the city of Minneapolis.

Glass, who earned a Master's Degree in Jewish Education, has the title of programming planner and coordinator, but her duties include running *shivah* (mourning) *minyans*, responsibilities in the morning *minyan*, working with converts, and filling in for the rabbi when necessary.

She said, "I see myself not only as showing that women can serve in a spiritual capacity but creating a new position so that the rabbi doesn't have a monopoly in these areas."

Glass characterized the 1100-family Conservative congregation as "ahead of a lot of places in a lot of things. Women read from the Torah and conduct services regularly. I've encountered very little resistance because of my sex. More because of my age. I'm 23 and look even younger. When people see me come in for a *shivah minyan* they look twice."

Glass has just completed a packet on "How to Do Jewish Feminist Programming," prepared for the North American Jewish Students' Network.

The issue of whether women will be accepted as cantors within Conservative Judaism has yet to reach the intensity of the debate over women rabbis.

Although the Jewish Theological Seminary refuses to admit women to its cantorial program, and the Conservative movement's Cantors Assembly has yet to consider the possibility of admitting a woman, small changes are taking place.

Elaine Shapiro, who as a JTS student kept unsuccessfully pressuring the Seminary Cantors Institute to treat her as a cantorial student, has now been hired as cantor of Temple Bet Am Shalom, a Conservative-Reconstructionist congregation in White Plains, N.Y.

Shapiro, who has her Bachelor of Sacred Music from the JTS Cantors Institute-Seminary College of Music, said, "I could have gotten a job in the Reform movement with maybe two or three times the salary, but I chose the Conservative movement. That's where my heart and my education are, and I was trying to make the breakthrough," which she feels she has accomplished.

Her commitment to Conservative Judaism recalls the words of Sandy Levine, who was determined to be accepted as a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary (see "Gentlemen's Agreement at the Seminary" by Amy Stone, LILITH Vol. I, No. 3). Levine is now a Reform rabbinical student in her first year at the New York branch of Hebrew Union College. She said: "They're open, they're warm, they're human. I wouldn't change at this point though I'll fight for change, and I'll fight for the women who want to become Conservative rabbis."

Levine received supportive responses from around the country for her fight to be admitted as a Conservative rabbinical student. One of the most supportive letters, from Robert Scherr, cantor of Temple Israel of Natick, Mass., broadened the issue to include both rabbis and cantors. He wrote:

"In my concern for admitting women to the cantorate in Conservative synagogues, I'm standing in a pretty lonely corner of the shul....

"I know that the Cantors Assembly is light-years away from ever facing the issue squarely. Yet I also know that there are individual cantors like myself who feel a need to encourage anyone interested in the cantorate to pursue such studies....

"I would be pleased to give any encouragement I can, either by moral support or training, to women interested in pursuing the role of cantor.

"It is a long, slow process—I don't need to tell you—for the RA, CA, and faculty of JTS to come to an appreciation of women as active leaders in ritual life. As important as the political lobbying to the school and to the rabbinic and cantorial organizations, encouragement of individuals and their aspirations will help to build a climate in which ideas once difficult to deal with will be eased into even the popular consciousness."

—A.S.

Congregation Beth El Zedeck, a Conservative synagogue in Indianapolis, has set a "first" in American synagogue life by employing a wife-and-husband rabbinical team. Rabbi Sandy Sasso has been appointed director of the congregation's youth and educational programs. Her husband, Rabbi Dennis Sasso, has been named rabbi of the congregation. Both rabbis were ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia.

Beverly Weintraub Magidson of Detr served as student rabbi to the Reform Co gregation in San Juan, Puerto Rico dur the High Holy Days in September. She i fourth-year student at the Hebrew Uni College-Jewish Institute of Religion in N York and will be ordained as a rabbi spring 1979. She's a graduate of Brand University, and has received numero prizes in Bible and Talmud.

L.A. Forum on Feminism, Judaism, Anti-Semitism

A group of women sat in a circle. So were Jewish. Many were not. Ellen Ledl began. "We're here tonight to share our periences and pride about being Jewi women."

A simple beginning to a complex and warding evening. That was the atmosph at the recent Forum on Jewish Women h at the YWCA in Pasadena, California. T Forum served as a sounding board for tending Los Angeles women and focused women's dual roles in Judaic life today being Jewish and being a feminist.

The Forum was the last in a series of fo held in Los Angeles but was the only o that dealt with the Jewish topic. Along w Ledley, organizers of the evening includ Sharone Abramowitz, Candace Compt and Janine Baer. All brought their perso experiences as Jewish women to the disc sion.

Baer and the other group leaders beg the evening by discounting Judaism as patriarchal religion. She said being Jew was more of "an identity" where a wom can "feel free to define for herself what means to be Jewish and how much religi she wants to accept or reject."

Another topic covered was anti-Se tism. Compton explained the subject as type of oppression much like sexism. It re resents misinformation about a sector society and it hurts. To say that Jewi women are obnoxious and loud is like b lieving the sexist thought that all wom are basically passive and want to be do inated."

They also stressed the value for bo Jews and non-Jews of understanding an Semitism. Forum leaders said understandi anti-Semitism would inspire protests agai stereotypes which result in insulting jok about Jewish women.

One of the most interesting portions the Forum was an open discussion abo how Jewish women "passed" for non-Je in America. Many blue-eyed women sa they weren't thought to be Jewish. Tho with small noses agreed they could pa too. Another woman felt that any aspect Anglo beauty possessed by a Jew ma overall acceptance easier. Others express

re personal opinions. Those with parents European origin said they didn't like to e friends hear their parents' accents and a lot of questions.

Leaders and Jewish participants alike the exchange was good, that it had of- d everyone, even non-Jews, a chance to r first-hand how subtly anti-Semitism ks.

An invaluable portion of the Forum lt with a historical view of women ughout Jewish history.

"There's little recognition of ethnic nen in history," said Abramowitz. any of the conditions we face as Jewish nen today are not faced by other nen."

She mentioned the Jewish mother stereo- e—what she called "the bitchy, castra-, domineering, nagging, Yiddish woman acts out all these things through her her role." This stereotype, she said, is a rce of comedy in American culture, in es and television. She questioned the ual source of the Jewish mother person- y.

"Yiddish literature is 99% male," she l. "A whole body of Yiddish women's try is just now being translated. This me never comes up as dominant in Euro- n literature. It first develops in American rature."

She added that when Jewish women fled pogroms of Europe with their families came to the United States, they were no ger needed to fulfill a secular role in the ish household. They were told to be- ne accepted members of society, in other rds, to "pass."

"The message was to assimilate," she l. "America told them, 'You're threaten- ' So the stereotype started because they not fit America's idea of the role of the nan. This was a combination of anti- nitism and sexism."

She also said that the persecution of ish women should not be tolerated as a antic theme in literature. "Rape was d in the pogroms to persecute the Jews their property. Jewish women were a e part of what was considered prop- ," she said.

After several hours of history, singing, stions and answers, many Los Angeles ish and non-Jewish women felt they had n enlightened. They had stepped back Jewish history and philosophy. To- er they had questioned being both Jew- and feminist. And these were the original cepts behind the Forum.

Janine Baer provided an accurate sum- ion: "For Jewish women, we wanted to sue the experience of being Jewish. For -Jewish women, we wanted to provide urate information to take out into the ld. In the end we wanted all of us to n more and find out exactly what the ish woman's experience is all about."

—**Andrea Platt Hecht**

Amy Stone

The outstanding child care was a model for other Jewish conferences.

Education Conference Discusses Sex-Role Stereotyping

Over 700 people from the United States (including one woman from Hawaii) and Canada attended the Second Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education, held at the Rochester Institute of Technology August 24-29, 1977. Participation focused on the Jewish teacher in the broadest definition of the term—youth movement leaders and community center workers, teachers and administrators from day schools and afternoon schools.

Sex-role stereotyping was the only feminist issue covered directly by the conference. The workshop on "Male/Female: How to Avoid Role Stereotyping in Jewish Children," was led by Annette Daum, Coordinator of the Religious Action Department of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues.

Discussing how to work with religious-school teachers, Daum said, "They're doing the best they can. It's our job to help them do better. It's a matter of sensitizing." Daum emphasized the importance of choosing instructional material, such as Bible stories, which show active, heroic women to balance the way "males are always shown as brighter and more active than females."

[Annette Daum's six-page summary of a May 1976, conference on avoiding role typing in the Jewish school curriculum, which includes examples from different grade levels and sources, is available free from the May conference's sponsor, the Committee on Religious Education of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues, 838 Fifth Ave. Dept. L, New York, NY 10021, attention Ms. Daum.]

While it was surprising to see on the program only one workshop dealing with a specifically feminist issue, many of the other workshop leaders had woven these concerns into their formats. Ruth Pinkerson, a doctoral candidate at Temple University in Early Childhood Education, stressed the necessity for helping young children become comfortable with eliminating the traditional male/female roles in reciting blessings. Ruby Strauss, a media producer from South Orange, N.J., described her careful attention to eliminating sex-role stereotyping in her Jewish films and filmstrips. Helping family relationships accommodate new developments in male/female roles was one of the topics discussed by Molly Charter, a Boston therapist and family education specialist. Cherie Koller-Fox of Brookline, Mass., a key conference planner, observed that people have begun to integrate issues such as role-stereotyping and equal participation of women into their general outlook.

Noticeably absent in a field in which women predominate was discussion about women in administrative positions, salaries, benefits, unions and other job-related issues.

An outstanding feature of the conference was the Child Care Center, led by Sandy Walters, Director of Early Childhood Education at the Jewish Community Center of Rochester. The program included making *havdalah* (post-Shabbat) candles, and producing and videotaping a play with the help of Portable Channel, a local media group. When asked about the child-care program, several of the children affirmed their interest in attending another such conference next year. The conference was made possible by grants from the Jewish Community Feder-

ation of Rochester, as well as many other local and national Jewish organizations and individuals.

At its closing plenary session, the conference adopted resolutions establishing a permanent organization, to be known as the Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education, with membership open to all concerned with Jewish education. Among the goals of the Coalition is a commitment to remove sexism from schools and curricular materials. Voted down was a resolution recommending the promotion of unionization.

Anyone interested in more information (or a Conference tee-shirt) should contact:
The Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education 15 East 26th Suite 1350
New York, New York 10010

—**Martha Rock Birnbaum**

Winnipeg Shul Equalizes Ritual Roles

Breaking a pattern of almost 90 years, Shaarey Zedek, the oldest Conservative synagogue in Winnipeg, Canada, recently voted to include women in ritual "equalized to that of men." More than 70% of the 300 members attending the meeting to consider the question voted yes. While various Conservative rabbis made negative comments on the action, Orthodox Rabbi Neal Rose of the Judaic Studies Department of the University of Manitoba, stated that "there is nothing to prevent a woman being called to the Torah...." adding that "the decision is acceptable if Shaarey Zedek is governed according to *halachah* (Jewish law)."

The Winnipeg decision will be implemented in four phases that will take about a year—giving the congregation a chance to "adjust" to the changes proposed.

Houston

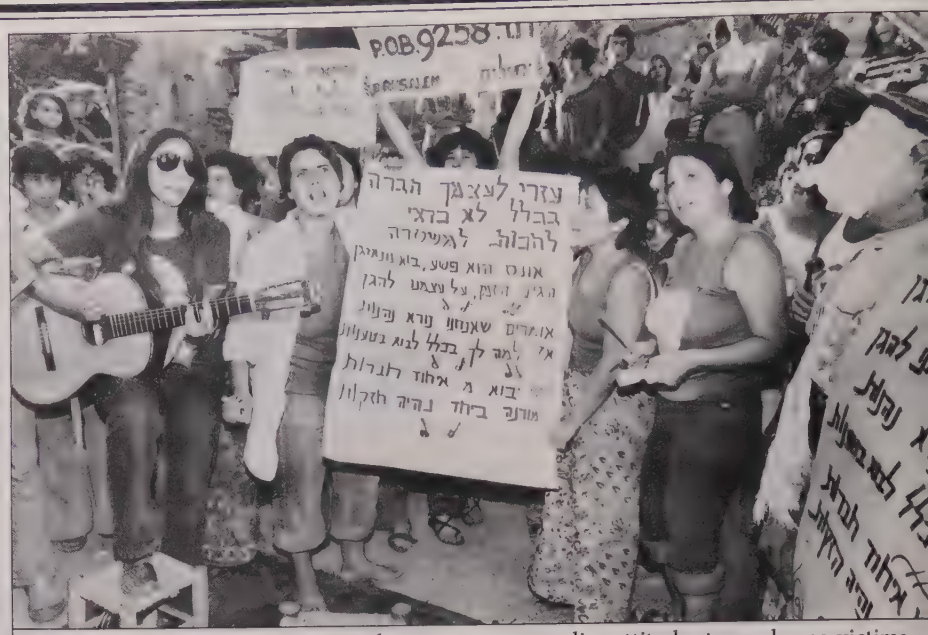
The National IWY (International Women's Year) Conference, held November 19-21 in Houston, produced a strong affirmative vote for what has been called "the Women's Agenda," incorporating three major goals of feminists: support for the ERA, right to abortion, and civil rights for homosexuals.

Among the many meetings that preceded the Houston Conference were several which focused on the prospective role of Jewish women there. Initially, the meetings were convened by the Leadership Conference of National Jewish Women's Organizations—an umbrella group—to discuss how Jewish delegates could prevent any anti-Israel resolution from reaching the floor.

The Jewish women's organization leaders (both volunteer and professional) went on from a consideration of this problem to a discussion of what the IWY conference's real purpose was. One of the participants expressed privately what a few women had tentatively suggested:

"If we were to follow the path laid out for us by the male Jewish leaders, we'd remain silent on women's issues altogether. Many Jewish men want us in Houston only to defend Jewish interests. We must also identify as *women* and not let our role at the IWY Conference be determined by the men."

A statement signed by the organizations and some individual Jewish feminists stressed a commitment to "moving American society toward an acceptance of women in full equality and in full participation in all aspects of our society." This is the first time that Jewish women's organizations joined together to put themselves on record in favor of the Women's Agenda.



Feminists in Jerusalem use street theater to protest police attitudes toward rape victims.

Street Theater in Jerusalem Protests Rape

"I would like to report a rape."
"Are you married?"
"Are you a virgin?"
"Do you take the Pill?"
"So what're you worried about, lady?"

This exchange took place not in the local police station, but in front of Jerusalem's largest department store, *"HaMashbir."* The occasion was a demonstration held on August 3 by the Israeli Feminist Movement against the degrading treatment of rape victims by authorities and by the general public.

Members of the women's street theater group dramatized this humiliating treatment and the attitudes toward rape which are behind it. At the same time, about 30 members of the Jerusalem branch of t movement demonstrated and distribut leaflets explaining their position a demands:

•Special rape units composed of wom police officers to handle rape cases must organized. They would interrogate the v tim and accompany her when she goes fo medical examination.

•Psychological help must be made ava able to the victim, if such help is neede

•Police officers must be educated abo rape—that it exists, that it is a serious cri of assault, and that the victim is in need understanding, sensitive treatment.

•There must be recognition of rape a crime that can be committed within m riage, and in other relationships as well.

•Rapists must be punished; they must brought to trial and they must receive se tences commensurate with their crimes.

In 1976, 135 women reported cases rape to the Israeli police. This number re resents a fraction of the rapes that actua took place that year. Rape victims, like t rest of society, often believe that they the selves are somehow to blame, that son how by their actions or manner of dre they brought on the attack themselv They are almost universally ashamed to to the police, embarrassed by what has ha pened to them and fearful of the kind treatment dramatized by the theater grou

The police, products of their socie show no more understanding than the pe ple on the street. A woman who had be raped near the Hebrew University and w did report to the police vowed that s would never go to them again. She s their leering grins and insulting assumpti that she had actually enjoyed the expe ence were almost more horrible than

e itself. "It was like being raped all over in," she said.

The Israeli Feminist Movement skit was ed on a true story in the press concern- a young woman who was raped and o reported the crime to the police. She s subjected to callous interrogation by male officers, after which she was told hitchhike to the hospital for a medical mination. Up to this point the skit was thful to reality, even using the same estions that the police had asked the wo- n. But one important change was made. the skit, the victim gets angry and calls all women to unite, to learn self-defense d to demand better treatment of the au- rities.

In real life the woman, rejected by her nce—who held her guilty for what had ppened—committed suicide.

The feminists' demonstration got a xed reaction from the crowd outside "*Ha- shbir.*" Although there were those who reed with the women, many spectators not even understand what was going Street theater is a new phenomenon in ael and political street theater was, until w, unheard of.

One of the players held a large placard which was written in old-fashioned Heb- v lettering "Avoid Rape." She was joined another woman who, on that hot sum- r day, was wearing a long-sleeved maxi- ss, a large hat, a veil, gloves, boots and carf. After her came another woman with other placard: "Dress Modestly." Many ople did not understand. Assuming that victim is responsible for the crime that perpetrated against her, the people ap- ved of the straightforward admonition t they thought the women were present- . Next time, the feminists have decided, woman will wear a large feed sack with uge cardboard padlock around her mid- . They hope this costume will be suffi- ntly absurd to get their message across.

The theater group is now working on a neral feminist program which they intend ake to several cities, performing both on streets and indoors. Other members of Jerusalem branch of the Israeli Feminist vement are trying to raise money to en a women's center in the capital. They pe to establish a 24-hour rape hot-line, d to provide services to rape victims and tered wives. Meanwhile, the Jewish egraphic Agency reported that a Tel iv woman recently sent IL 1000 to the mier's office to help create a govern- ntal unit that would follow up rape cases d try to reduce that crime. The woman d she was prompted by newspaper re- ts of a girl who was raped by three men er she was kidnapped at the Petach Tikva terminal. "It occurred to me that my ghter cannot walk safely in the bus sta- n anymore," she said.

—**Tamar Kaufman**

Letter from Israeli Feminist

October 1, 1977

The one-year lease on our Feminist Center in Tel Aviv is coming to an end and we [The Feminist Movement of Israel] are desperately trying to raise money. To our great pleasure, a group of 23 women artists—some even famous!!—agreed to participate in a group show at the Center called "Women in Art" in October, and contribute 30% of sales to the Center. The show includes painting, sculpture, designer jewelry, silk prints. After the show closes the artists are scheduled to hold a roundtable at the Center with women artists who refused to participate in the group show.

We've been having a two-month petition-signing campaign going on to save the abortion law even though it is not a good law. We've scheduled a public forum on "Why Abortion is a Feminist Issue." The Jerusalem branch has been performing street theater on the subject, while signing petitions. Haifa and Beersheva (new branch) are also cooperating on this.

We have decided to cooperate with the League for Equal Rights for Women in the Courts [see LILITH Vol. I, No. 1, *Tsena Rena*], which is essentially a group of non-feminist women who are trying to improve women's position in the rabbinical divorce courts by pressing for more flexible and modern interpretation of the *halachah* (Jewish law)—which they say will still keep it strictly Orthodox. We may offer them the use of one of our rooms for a divorce arbitration court they are trying to create, so that the divorcing couples will make all their financial and other arrangements out of the regular court, and thus save money on rapacious lawyers and (mostly) uncaring rabbis. They are also pressing for the acceptance of a premarital agreement granting automatic divorce to the wife under certain conditions —which would be a big step forward here.

The Herzliyah sub-branch (it's really part of Tel Aviv) is gingerly trying to create a rape crisis center. (I say gingerly since the police here are not exactly what you would call up to date.) If it works we hope it will spread.

The Beersheva women have formed a health collective to try to improve the primitive conditions in the Beersheva maternity (only one) hospital.

—**Joanne Yaron**

Our Soviet Sisters

•Ella Feinberg died July 9 of asthma in Novisibirsk despite many years of desperate pleas by her parents to permit the family to emigrate to Arad, Israel, where treatment was available for her. Ella was 13 years old.

•Malka Chudnovsky of Kiev is recuperating from a severe beating she and her ill husband, Wolf, sustained from the KGB as a parting "present" before being given permission to emigrate with their son Grisha. A mathematician, Grisha is dying of a nerve disorder.

•Janna Bernstein, a Soviet immigrant to Israel, was reunited with her fiance, Vinnitsa activist Mikhail Mager, who just received his exit visa. Bernstein and Mager were married in Netanya, Israel.

Mazel Tov

Sharon Strassfeld, appointed Director, Jewish Book Council, sponsored by the National Jewish Welfare Board, N.Y.

Judith Hauptman, the first woman to teach Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary, N.Y., appointed Assistant Dean of the Seminary College.

Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner, appointed Acting Associate Dean of the Jewish Theological Seminary's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (a one-year appointment).

Dr. Karen Bacon, appointed Dean, Stern College for Women, N.Y. (Stern is the women's college of Yeshiva University.)

Dr. Blanche D. Blank, appointed Vice President for Academic Affairs, Yeshiva University, N.Y., YU's first woman vice president in its 92-year history.

Debra Hachen of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, the first rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College in New York who is the daughter and great granddaughter of Reform rabbis, served as student rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in Twinsburg, Ohio (reported by Gloria Ulmer).

Jeanne Edelson appointed Director of Public Relations of The National Council of Jewish Women. She replaces the late Henri Ben-Ami.

Sandra Behar has been appointed associate director of the JNF Houston-Southern Texas Region.

Linda Brown has been elected president of the North American Aliyah Movement.

Dr. Muriel Mallin Berman was elected treasurer of the Jewish Publication Society of America.

A special mazel tov to **Dr. Rosalyn Sussman Yalow**, a biophysicist, who was the second woman ever to be awarded a Nobel Prize in Medicine.

Among the ideas that sparked this section's name is a book by Roslyn Lacks which has been in progress for several years and is scheduled to be published in 1978, dealing with the concept of *kol ishah* and its impact on Jewish women over the centuries.

THE POPULATION

Why Jewish Leaders Want Jewish Women to be Fruitful and Multiply

PANIC

Bill Ashe

Shirley Frank

For just about as long as anyone can remember, Jewish speakers, leaders, kers, writers, and general semi-professional groaners and hand-wringers have overwhelmingly concerned with the tion known as "Jewish survival." Although we have survived for over 3,000 s, we do not take that survival for ted; in fact, we seem to regard it as an plicable anomaly, and our mind-set is of perpetual vigilance against threats to continued existence. In the past, of urse, and in other parts of the world, the hreats have been obvious physical ones: ars, pogroms, persecutions, forced conversions, political repression, the Holocaust. Here in America, we have long recognized and identified the greater danger as deriving from more subtle causes, such as assimilation, ignorance, apathy and intermarriage. But now a new threat has been spied on our bleak horizon, and it is spreading over us rapidly like a malignant black fallout cloud. This new danger is an insidious three-initialed foe more to be feared than the KGB, the PLO, or the KKK—namely, the ZPG, or Zero Population Growth movement. Young Jewish people, it seems, ever concerned about all the problems of humanity, have thoughtfully, though misguidedly, taken it upon themselves to volunteer en masse to do their share in not adding to the world's "population explosion." The result is a "demographic crisis," according to our many commentators on the subject. They point out that our birth rate is lower than that of the rest of the American—not to speak of the world—population, that it is declining, that we have not yet recovered our pre-World War II numbers, that we are barely reproducing ourselves even now, and that, at this rate, given the large numbers of defectors we have to account for, we are dooming ourselves to imminent extinction unless something is done immediately to turn this pernicious trend around.

To this end, a large number of Jewish periodicals and newspapers have published at least one article on this "hot" subject, many rabbis have sermonized about it from their pulpits, and in February 1976 a Conference on Jewish Fertility was held in New York at which scholars read papers exploring the problem from various historical and sociological perspectives. Moreover, as is usual in Jewish life, an organization has been formed to tackle the problem at hand: "PRU"—for Jewish "Population Regeneration Union", punning on the Hebrew commandment "*p'ru ur'vu*" ("be fruitful and multiply")—founded in New York by Rabbi William Berman, a recent graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Among other things, "PRU" disseminates question-and-answer leaflets urging us to save ourselves before it is "too late."

As we Jews know only too well, an idea that is hammered out continually in an alarmist or propagandistic manner by very sincere and devoted, sometimes fanatic, people, can begin to take hold, regardless of its relationship to truth. That a serious and even critical Jewish demographical problem exists is gradually coming to be taken for granted. Even such a hip new publication as *The Second Jewish Catalog*, for example, in its opening chapter on "Birth," alludes in passing to "the fact that Jews as a people have a lot of catching up to do." Leaders of organizations obviously feel called upon to issue statements (*see box page 16*) not on whether or not the problem exists—for this is already considered a given—but on what is to be done about it.

- On January 24, 1974, *The New York Times* reported that Rabbi Sol Roth, newly-elected president of the New York Board of Rabbis, stated "that Jewish families should have at least three children and asserted that the frequently projected goal of zero population growth 'should find no application in the Jewish community.'"
- On July 14, 1975, *Time* Magazine published a brief article called "The Disappearing Jews," including an already much-publicized recommendation by Orthodox Rabbi Norman Lamm—now president of Yeshiva University—that "each Jewish couple should have four or five children" because "Jews are a disappearing species."
- At its annual convention, in June 1977, the Reform Movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), an organization known for its liberal stands on most issues, released a statement scarcely differing from those of the Orthodox rabbis, urging Jewish couples "to have at least two or three children." Their reason? "Because there are simply not enough of us to be assured of survival in succeeding generations."

Clearly the idea has "caught on"—with all the power of an idea whose time has come.

But why, we might naturally ask, has the time for this idea come just now? Has our "fertility" been attacked by some previously unknown disease and taken a sudden downward plunge? Is it because no one thought of it before—because, as one of Rabbi Berman's "PRU" leaflets puts it, "until recently the most immediate threat to our survival has been unaccountably ignored"? Would the other problems to which Rabbi Berman alludes—"Jewish illiteracy, secularism, materialism, and of course persecution"—miraculously disappear if only we could dispatch this "most immediate threat"? Are we, in fact, in imminent danger of going the way of the dodo bird and the sabre-toothed tiger? Or are there other reasons for this preoccupation just now?

And, finally, what does it mean for the Jewish woman, just beginning to seek an

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Women's Views

The Jewish community has the lowest birthrate of any religious or ethnic group in the country, yet many Jewish women continue to put off having children until their middle thirties so they can pursue careers. For the rest of the world ZPG is a wonderful thing. For the Jewish people, in view of the huge losses our people have suffered in our own lifetime, it is a form of suicide, a death wish.
Perhaps the Jewish thing to do in light of our community's population needs would be to begin our families early, with part-time or delayed career for the husband or wife. Starting a family ten years earlier would add a new generation of Jews every 30 years.

——Blu Greenberg, from a speech to the American Jewish Congress Women's Division, April 25, 1977

The continuity of Jews and Judaism is not only a numerical issue but a qualitative one requiring the strengthening of a Jewish identity. Losses due to intermarriage, secularization and assimilation...cannot be countered simply by advocating an increase in the Jewish birth rate. There is no guarantee that more Jewish children will necessarily mean more committed Jewish youth.

——Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, *Call Them Builders* (booklet), Reconstructionist Federation of Congregations and Havurot, New York, 1977

I feel that what the Population Regeneration Union (PRU) is asking shows a lack of respect for the woman, for the child and for the family. To be blunt, they are asking Jewish women to become baby machines, hatching ...as many kids as possible for the political benefit of the community. Nowhere do they talk about how a woman might feel using her body in this way....Women, mothers, are already feeling burdened and wanting an opportunity to do more with their lives than simply care for their children and their men. PRU is asking women, once again, to be "enablers" —to subordinate their own needs to that of the community and to become either eternal mothers and housewives or baby-makers!

——Mary Gendler, *Women's American Ort Reporter* September/October 1976

identity for herself beyond the old familiar role of "Jewish mother," to be urged to have a family of at least two or three, or four or five children? Does it not seem a strange, if not a perverse, coincidence that, after all these centuries of Jewish history, just in the very decade when Jewish women are demanding greater and more meaningful participation in Jewish religious and communal life, beyond and even, in some cases, outside of motherhood—in the very decade when, for instance, women are finally being ordained as rabbis—certain segments of the Jewish community are loudly hitting the old "barefoot and pregnant" motif as if our very lives depended on it?

Perhaps the most basic question—the one that must be dealt with first—is: How much *do* our lives depend on increasing our birth rate? Why are the prospects for our survival deemed to be so precarious—and why now?

Nearly always mentioned is the fact that we lost six million of our people in the Holocaust and that we have not yet numerically replaced them. A recent CCAR position paper notes "a touch of irony" in the fact that some people are choosing to have no children at all just when "the need to replenish the Jewish people has never been greater." But is this true? It seems, on the contrary, that, despite God's promise to Abraham, the Jews have never been a particularly numerous people. As we know from our long history of wanderings and persecutions, and from our liturgy itself, we have long been "a small remnant," "a saving remnant." As recently as the year 1650, there were only about 675,000 Jews in the entire world. Despite relatively poor medical conditions, the arrival of the Enlightenment, which led to rapid assimilation in western Europe, and semi-medieval persecutions and pogroms which continued in eastern Europe, we did not die out as a people. If we did not die out then, why should we die out now, when, even after the Holocaust, we are 14,000,000 strong? Moreover, inasmuch as the Holocaust ended over thirty years ago, the allusions to it do not in themselves explain why we are hearing this frantic call to action just at this particular time.

Another explanation offered is that we have had our eyes newly opened by the most authoritative Jewish population survey ever to have been undertaken, the 1970 National Jewish Population Survey, the results of which are being released gradually in the *American Jewish Year Book*. This survey confirms that our birth rate is indeed relatively low.

But even this information should come as a surprise to no one. As far back as 1889, a study of over 10,000 Jewish families in the United States revealed that the Jewish birth rate was lower than the non-Jewish. Similar findings were noted in 1905, and even during the heyday of what we remember as the mammary-gland fifties, when a house in the suburbs and a family of 3.7 childre were supposed to be every girl's dream, study showed that in 1955 the average fam ily size of Catholic and Protestant couple was 2.1, compared to an average of only 1. for Jewish couples. Several studies cite through the sixties reveal similar propo tions. Thus, the survey does not actuall seem to indicate that the 1970's are an more critical a period in Jewish history tha earlier decades.

It is, as I suggested above, largely due t the malign influence of ZPG that the var ous doomsayers attribute our latest "dan ger," and against which they raise the heaviest artillery. ZPG, according to th rather frenzied and much-repeated argu ment, though fine and even important fo the rest of the world, must not apply to th Jews. It is only *other* people whom w should expect to exercise self-restraint, re producing, as it were, on the quota system

This view reflects another popular argu ment for reversing the current trend toward a low Jewish birth rate—namely, that Jew are special people. According to this argu ment, it is the highly talented, intelligen young people who are limiting their fam lies, and in some cases choosing not to pro create at all. Nevertheless, the remarkabl attainments of American Jews and their ad mirable contributions to society have fre quently been noted as a strong reason wh we owe it to society to continue to produc and raise as many of these prodigies as poss ible. "The Jewish people," as one of th "PRU" leaflets puts it, "have made grea contributions to civilization and 'cooperating' themselves out of existence would be a disservice to 'humanity' as well as to themselves." The fact remains, however, that th survival of even so "special" a people as th Jews cannot be guaranteed unless the huma race—of which, after all, we are a part— survives.

One might justifiably wonder, nonethe less, how many couples actually base thei childbearing decisions on concern about th survival of the human race, or, for tha matter, how many would base their dec sions on concern about the survival of th Jewish people. It may well be that the whol ZPG argument simply provides an addi tional rationalization for couples who hav already made up their minds for other more personal reasons, and even the doom sayers would do better to turn their atten tion to the more likely reasons.

Running at a distance behind the ZPG Movement as another reason for our curren "plight"—but perhaps closer to the mark— is the matter of values and priorities—th high value placed, as one advocate for Jew ish fertility puts it, on a "lifestyle of hedon ism and unimpeded mobility" or "the arbi rary purpose of pursuing a hedonistic life style." In addition, of course, there is als the growing number of people who are di vorced or whose marriages are so unstabl

ne might justifiably wonder how many couples base their childbearing cisions on concern about the survival of the Jews."

ey hesitate to bring a child or another into a world that might involve a ul single-parent situation or a compli- even nasty, custody case.

nay seem strange, but in most of the sions of this burning issue of Jewish ty," there is little or no direct refer- o the effects of the women's move- even though it should be obvious that mber of children a woman chooses to r not to have is likely to be related to spirations and her achievements in areas of life. One might conclude, eading the various articles, that most s consult world population charts be- eciding whether or not to have a baby, than consider who will be responsi- r taking care of the child. In most of icles and speeches, feminism, when it tioned at all, is passed over quickly, ugh it were another faddish trend like ism or a swinging lifestyle. Despite ct that attempting to raise the birth ove its present levels means, for the part, urging the diminishing number ple who are in stable marital situa- o have three or four children, there is mention of the woman who must de- not whether to have a child or a Cad- but whether to have that third or child or to take advantage of newly ded opportunities and seek a much- ed education or career. Passed over lightly is the fact that additional earing and childrearing are likely to he expense of women's emergence and lfillment, precisely at a time when, as ted earlier, Jewish women are begin- o assert rightful claims for a life and ntity of their own, apart from their as wives and mothers.

ne might have supposed, offhand, ne women's movement, far from being ed, would be attacked head-on as the pal culprit responsible for the dimin- Jewish birth rate, but, as we have this is not the case. It is, indeed, this ce of a feminist awareness, this evi- nability to come to terms with the ist implications of the issue, that rs the current panic about Jewish "fer- somewhat suspect and strongly sug- hat its emergence so close on the heels e emergence of Jewish feminism is hing more than a coincidence.

is suspicion is intensified when we der that most of the speakers and writ- articles and position papers urging o have more babies are male—a nota- ception being Blu Greenberg, who de- the fact that "many Jewish women ue to put off having children until niddle thirties so they can pursue car- and whose husband Irving Green- name is listed among the "supporters" of "PRU." Interestingly, all the other people whose names appear on the PRU letterhead are also male. This is perhaps not entirely inappropriate, inasmuch as the commandment to be fruitful and multiply is considered by the traditional-minded to apply, like nearly all commandments, to men only. It is rather a pity, indeed, that they cannot fulfill it by themselves—but, in the present state of technology, women are necessary.

Even this fact is not always to be taken for granted. At the end of one of the first popular treatments of this subject—what one might call the seminal piece—written for *Commentary* in September 1961, Milton Himmelfarb inquired: "Where does a Jew's obligations lie? Should he absent him from paternity awhile, for the good of the human race? Or should he be of good courage, and play the man for his people?" One hardly dares to wonder what "play the man" means in this context. It seems clear, however, that man is making decisions about his paternity quite as if he were a self-fertilizing flower. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Mr. Himmelfarb's name also appears on "PRU"'s stationery.

One still can hardly avoid the possibility that this latest panic is a kind of gut response to the rapid changes that are everywhere taking place as a result of the women's movement—changes that are obviously taking place too rapidly for many people, especially for many men.

There is little to be gained, however, from pretending that the women's movement does not exist, or that its influence is trivial. Only by being aware, for example, that family size is related to women's aspirations for themselves, can we truly understand the dynamics of population growth and make effective decisions about what, if anything, needs to be done.

For lack of a feminist perspective, the causes cited by the various doomsayers for the alleged demographic crisis here in America tend to miss the mark and therefore not to lend themselves to appropriate solutions. If couples are refusing to procreate for such reasons of hedonism and materialism, we may as well admit that these people are already lost to Judaism through assimilation, not sterility. But is the pursuit of pleasure and material goods really the motive for postponing parenthood? From a feminist point of view, the allusions to hedonism and materialism may be explained partly as code language recalling the days when women's income was considered mere "pin money," and women were often urged to stay home and give their children the love and attention that they needed more than the "little luxuries" a housewife's outside income might procure for the family. Couples who delayed having children while the wife continued to work were thought to be saving up their money for the purchase of a home or to indulge in trips and other extravagances.

This point of view, besides failing to take into consideration a real economic world in which a woman's income usually goes to buy necessities, not luxuries, ignores the possibility that women, like men, work for reasons other than money—to utilize their talents, for example, to meet people, to contribute something to society, to maintain dignity and self-respect. These complex motivations are lost when the head of the Rabbinical Council of America, Rabbi Walter S. Wurzburger, bemoans the fact that "the pursuit of personal careers and other indulgences are taking precedence over the traditional joy of family life and the transmission of the Jewish heritage to the next generation." He is clearly suggesting that a career is an "indulgence," not a necessity; but since we all know that a career of some sort is a necessity for a man, we might conclude that he was speaking in a disguised way about women.

It seems unwise, to say the least, for responsible spokespersons of the Jewish community to be thus suggesting, however implicitly, that a woman's career is unimportant, or, its obvious corollary, that a woman's place is in the home. Those who point with such pride to the remarkable achievements attained by American Jews as a reason why we should raise our birth rate should recognize that this high achievement level has been reached almost entirely by Jewish men, and not by Jewish women. Quite conceivably, not one of these men interrupted his career to spend several years diapering babies. Since Jewish women presumably inherit the same genes as Jewish men—the genes that our doomsayers urge us to pass along to a multitudinous next generation—we can only conclude that a great deal of talent is being lost somewhere along the line—perhaps in the diaper pail; for Jewish women, in stark contrast to Jewish men, have been underachievers in virtually every field, or, at best, the mothers of overachievers. Unless the continued production of Jewish male prodigies is our only goal, we must wonder what appeal this argument could possibly have for the modern woman who may no longer be content to experience her achievements vicariously—in the time-honored, but much-maligned, Jewish-mother manner—through her children? And what sort of a future is envisioned for the larger number of girls who would doubtless also be born—would they, too, be seen primarily as the breeders and nurturers of future Jewish male prodigies?

Men's Views

If you want emergency powers—authoritarian, even totalitarian powers—you must first persuade people that there is an emergency.

——Milton Himmelfarb, *Population Control: For and Against* (New York, 1973, p. 200)

We have not paid sufficient attention to ZPG....While the rest of the world has been increasing, Jews have been decreasing. In effect, we are now confronted with the problem of a "preventive Holocaust" by which I mean not the murder of Jews already alive but the prevention of Jews from being born.

——Rabbi Norman Lamm, President of Yeshiva University, *Canadian Jewish News*, September 9, 1977

Many "liberated" young Jewish wives no longer regard the opportunities and responsibilities for rearing children, keeping a home, and engaging in constructive social or philanthropic work as sufficiently fulfilling....Even mothers of small children *with successful husbands arbitrarily* elect to return to the labor pool leaving much of the vital influence of early childhood training to maternal surrogates and day centers....The dramatic decline in the fertility rate of young women with greater educational background and higher family income...has been thoroughly documented....

——H.L. Roberts, "Endogenous Jewish Genocide—The Impact of the ZPG-Nonparenthood Movement," *The Reconstructionist*, November 1974 (italics added)

The disastrous implications of the ZPG movement for Jewish survival grow out of factors such as Jewish contraceptive expertise, delay in marriage, the favorable attitude of Jewish women and most Jewish physicians (92%!) to abortion on demand, and high and increasing rates of mixed marriages, assimilation and divorce...

——Rabbi Asher Bar-Zev, "ZPG and the Jewish Problem," *Conservative Judaism* Spring 1976

The Devil if he exists...exists to tempt God's creatures into refusing to breed.

——Norman Podhoretz, "Speak of the Devil," *Commentary*, April 1971

The Holocaust argument, too, must be understood in a different perspective. This argument in all likelihood owes its effectiveness to the fact that survivors of the Holocaust feel a certain guilt at having survived—and, in one way or another, we are all survivors. Whether deliberately or unconsciously, it seems for the purpose of nurturing such guilt feelings that the present downward trend in population growth is constantly associated with the Holocaust—as if those who are failing to reproduce in sufficient numbers are somehow collaborating with Hitler. Commentators quote Emil Fackenheim's powerful statement, "Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler." And, to reinforce the point still more strongly, the term "genocide" is used with abandon to describe what we are supposedly doing to ourselves. No one, however, should be more sensitive than Jews to the loss of meaning implied in the watering-down of the term "genocide" to mean anything less than the wholesale murder of human beings as practiced by the Nazis during World War II.

The fact remains that we cannot replace the Holocaust victims, and any attempt to equate the unborn with Jews who were murdered is an insult to the martyrs' memories—for surely we define those six million Jewish lives in terms more significant than their numbers alone. Moreover, those who urge women to breed more babies for the sake of increasing the Jewish population are strangely, indeed shockingly, echoing Hitler's exhortation of German women to breed more babies for the Fatherland.

If, on the other hand, we really seek to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust victims and to render their lives and perhaps even their deaths somehow meaningful, it may well be that a person who studies Jewish history, researches *shtetl* life, or teaches Yiddish is doing more to effect these goals than a person who stays at home producing a large number of babies. As Rabbi Rebecca Trachtenberg Alpert put it in the *Reconstructionist* (April 1977), "whether or not one chooses to become a biological parent, by a commitment to enhancing the life of the Jewish people, a person can exert an influence, can be a spiritual ancestor to future generations."

At this point, of course, one would expect any doomsayer to retort that one can hardly be a spiritual ancestor to future generations if there are no future generations. "Sociologists maintain," according to Rabbi Berman, "that if the present birth-intermarriage rates continue indefinitely, American Jewry will be reduced to a remnant within four generations." Rabbi Jonathan M. Brown of the Reform movement asks "How many Jews will there be in 2073, when our movement will celebrate its two hundredth anniversary? There is an increasing awareness of the *possibility* [his italics] that only a few Jews will remain; all the others will have disappeared, victims of assimilatio mixed marriage, indifference, and a lo birth rate."

But inasmuch as the low birth rate only *one* of several factors affecting Jewi prospects for survival, it follows that the is indeed room for the "spiritual ancesto the Jewish woman, for example, w makes a commitment to tackling one more of the other problems and who han down a meaningful Jewish heritage to niece or nephew, a neighbor's child, a st dent, a YWHA "little sister," an adopt child, or even a perfect stranger—perha even a future convert. There are more wa of enhancing the chances of Jewish surviv and even of increasing the number of Jew than just making a number of trips to t local lying-in hospital.

It also follows that we can ill afford alienate young Jewish women by promoti a primitive pronatalism that is almost i sulting, in its implication that Judais wants their wombs more than it wants the minds. Our drop-out rate is high enoug and it is no secret that an increasing numb of our intermarrying young people a women.

Let us suppose, though, that we are tal ing about women with some degree of inte est in or commitment to Judaism or to Jew ish life or culture—for obviously the a ready-tuned-out are not listening. Althoug it seems improbable that anyone would a tually act on the suggestion of a rabbi (u less, indeed, it is the rabbi's wife—or, in few cases, the rabbi herself) and have a bab to "save" the Jewish people, the net result o all this talk is undoubtedly to make a sign ficant number of people feel guilty or a least uncomfortable if they have no chi dren, one child, or even the commonly a cepted quota of one boy and one girl—th *halachically*-approved minimum. Comin at a time when new opportunities are finall opening up for women—including, as w have already noted, alternative, previousl unavailable ways of serving the Jewis community—this insistence on raising th birth rate seems to be saying to the Jewis woman that, no matter what her capabil ties or interests, the best and perhaps th only contribution she can make to Jewis survival is the production of more Jewis babies. She is now given to understand tha if the Jewish people should die out, it will b her fault. This is the kind of guilt trip tha Jewish women, already struggling with career vs. motherhood conflict, clearly d not need.

Of course, in a modern, liberated soci ty, there is no reason why there should co tinue to *be* any such conflict—no reaso why women should have to choose, as if w were still back in the nineteenth century o earlier, between being "biological ance tors" and "spiritual ancestors." The mo savvy of the doomsayers would doubtles claim that both brains and wombs are wan

nd would disagree that they in any way ɔcate the suppression of women's efforts uality—if for no other reason than that suppression is not likely to work. As ɔi Berman puts it, "the pious pro- ıcements of some, enjoining all women ıoose a home career, will do little to re- e present trends toward careers outside ıome." Although the phrase "present ds" can easily be seen to contain a subtle ercutting of the movement, implying as es that we are not talking about a seri- ɔermanent change, Rabbi Berman pre- s himself as a sympathizer: "What we e to do," he claims, "is dispel the myth more children and outside careers are ually exclusive." He provides some ɔrical precedent: "Jews have a long ition," he says, "of women working e raising families that reaches back to al times." Naturally there is a differ- between shearing sheep just outside the and going off to work as an executive corporation, however. Rabbi Berman, aps, has thought of this. "Many career ıen," he continues, "find more children lensome since despite their careers they bear the burden of childrearing single- ledly. This is unfair. We feel men should a greater role especially when their s work." The "especially" is a curious -away, for it indicates that the degree hich husbands play a role in childrear- s still thought of as optional.

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he Reform rabbis' position paper like- suggests that "a mother who objects to 'tied down' to the home, might under- a larger family if her husband was more ful." (The fact that "tied down" appears ıotation marks is again an indication the problem is not taken as seriously as ght be—that, perhaps, it is still a matter tting the harried young mother out of ıouse for an occasional shopping trip— he word "helpful" suggests, again, that usband is helping the wife perform *her*)

nyway, societal changes take a long and Jewish children are needed "now," ding to PRU, "before it is too late." can be done in the meantime? Rabbi an proposes the establishment of syn- ue-sponsored Jewish day care centers— credit, because not all commentators e subject seem aware either of the prob- r of this potential way of handling it. he fact is that so far the Jewish track d on day care has been far from good. ı ly have very few Jewish day care cen- ɔeen established, but those that have into existence have been aimed mainly e children of poor Jews or non-Jews as the efforts expended by the Nation- uncil of Jewish Women to establish day enters for black children), or children "broken homes"—not at the children ddle-class Jewish working parents who ften perfectly willing and able to pay service which they just cannot get. Jewish parents who desire day care are likely as not to find it in a church—certainly not in a synagogue. This is in spite of the fact that the synagogues, with their inadequate, if not moribund, afternoon Hebrew schools, could use a way to attract new families.

One of the worries of social planners is that, with people marrying later and having fewer children closer together, the motivation to affiliate with synagogues—which is related to having children of Hebrew school age—will diminish even below its present low level. Offering a valuable service like day care might serve to bring the family within the fold sooner; it would also provide the opportunity to educate the child Jewishly at an impressionable early age, so that we might hope to increase not only the number of Jews, but also the Jewish commitment and knowledge of children already born. Similarly, offering the equally necessary service of after-school care for the older child—mainly by expanding the existing Hebrew school programs into more complete recreational programs—might result in what many people have considered to be patently impossible: the revitalization of the afternoon Hebrew school.

Reform Rabbis

Outspoken opposition to the Central Conference of American Rabbis resolution calling for Jewish couples to have more children comes from Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Director of the Department of Interreligious Affairs at the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform).

Brickner, who along with Rabbi Edward Klein of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue is a member of the Clergyman's Committee of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization, said: "I didn't know that the CCAR passed such a resolution and if they did, it's stupid and I would oppose it. You can't say that the world suffers from overpopulation and at the same time say Jews should ignore this. I don't want to put myself in the vulnerable position of saying it's good for Puerto Ricans and poor South Americans to cut back on their population and not the Jews. I've never thought for a moment that the way you insure Jewish viability is sheer weight of numbers."

Another advantage that would be reaped from the establishment of Jewish day-care centers would be the formation for the child of a kind of surrogate extended family—a social and psychological support system beyond the limited bounds of the nuclear family that used to be provided by grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Children whose parents have followed employment opportunities to a new city or whose grandparents have migrated to Florida often can no longer drop in at "Grandma's" after school; the day care center, ideally, could help to fill the gap—by utilizing "foster grandparent" programs, for instance. It could help take the stress of constant child supervision off the parents who have to bear it alone as never before in history; and it would be particularly important, of course, for the rapidly growing number of single-parent families. It could also help give children *and parents* a sense of a caring Jewish community that is hard to come by today.

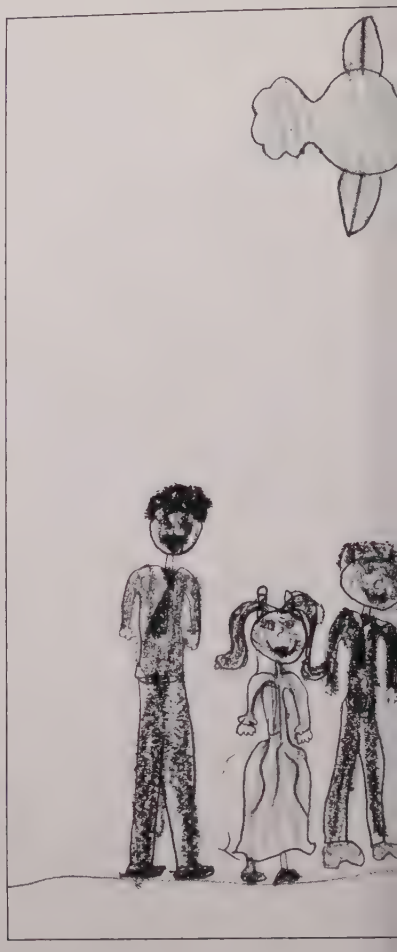
Indeed, it is not only day care that is needed, but a reorientation in our attitudes towards children altogether. Even people with small families—even with just one child—are virtually ostracized, not only from many restaurants, theaters, and apartment complexes that openly discriminate against children, but from many Jewish community events as well—unless, of course, they submit to the bother and expense of arranging for baby-sitters. How many couples, for example, are welcomed in synagogues with their restless small children or wailing infants? How many Jewish adult education programs offer child care for those who would otherwise not be able to attend them? *Every* Jewish institution, school, volunteer agency, synagogue, or recreational and cultural center should routinely provide child care for all daytime and evening activities, not only so that Jewish parents can be parents, but so that they can be *Jews*. Otherwise we are saying that all we want is an increased quantity of Jews without any consideration for the quality of life—including the quality of *Jewish* life—of those individuals, parents and children.

And indeed, I find that this is what depresses me most about the current debate concerning Jewish population. I find that the urging of Jewish women to become, as Mary Gendler put it, "baby machines," in order to save the Jewish people from extinction depresses and disgusts me—not so much because I am a feminist, but because I am a Jew. I am deeply ashamed at the idea of Judaism sinking to a level where we are scrounging around for every warm body we can get. It was for this reason, I thought, that we Jews rarely engaged in proselytizing or missionary work—because we were never unduly concerned with numbers, with quantity rather than quality.

Ultimately it is not appealing to be told that one must raise additional numbers of children, not only to make sure there are enough of us left after any possible future disaster, but to make sure there are enough of us left after taking into consideration those who intermarry, convert to various other religions and cults, or are hopelessly lost through assimilation. To assert that our major problem is now our low birth rate does not make these other problems go away; nor does it make them less severe. There is still a desperate need to ensure Jewish survival by making Judaism and Jewish life clearly meaningful and necessary. ☰

From Dallas Children's Essays

What's a Jewish Mother?



These sketches of the Jewish mother—either from life or idealized—were written by Jewish childr in Dallas as entries in an essay contest sponsored last fall by the Jewish Book Festival Committee. The 300 participants were in grades one through 9 in three Hebrew schools: Akiba Academy (Orthod day school), Temple Emanu-El Sunday School (Reform), and Congregation Shearith Israel's afterno and Sunday school (Conservative).

The Book Festival, coordinated by Naomi Goodell, Director of Cultural Arts of the Jewish Comm nity Center of Dallas, had as its overall theme "The Jewish Woman in America." The children were asked to write on one of two topics: "What is a Jewish Mother?" or "What is it that my mother does th makes my home Jewish?"

The children's concern with their mothers' nurturing roles is self-evident. Not so obvious (kids say the cutest *things!) is the fairly common view of Jewish mothers not only as selfless—literally—b also as followers and enforcers of the rules. Charity and obedience are what the kids seem to see in the Jewish mother. Or expect to see.* Or believe they should see. *So many of these mothers sound ali Are our children being trained to see us only in such narrow ways?*

We have no evidence that these children, or any other Jewish kids randomly selected, would hav any less limited views of their fathers. But nobody ever asks kids to write essays about Jewish fathe because there's no special role for them, no quick, stereotyped view to flash in front of the children before they write. An essay on the Jewish father would be synonymous with an essay on "Jew."

Only the women are called upon to demonstrate their Jewishness by what they do to/for/with their kids.

S.W

Bat Sheva Levy, B'nai Jeshurun Day School, New York

other is very nice. She means a lot to
he helps me do alot of my homework.
ares for me alot. She pays for alot of
ings I need. My mother sometimes hits
he reason why she hits me is because I
mething wrong, because I don't listen
, or if I yell at her.
y mother is the best mother in the
wide world.
y mother sends me to hebrew school
egular school. She helps me get good
s. She lets me go to alot of different
.
y mother keeps a good house. She
me get better when I am sick. She
me the right amount of medicine, not
le, not to much. My mother supplies
ll of the supplies I need, food, water
l of the rest of the supplies you need
e on.

Wendy P.
Age 10

takes care of me and I wouldn't be
ithout her. She helps me if I have a
m. My mother is a good Jewish moth-
ause she sends me to Religious School
ooks the appropriate food for holi-

Michael M.
(no age given)

My mother is a good mother because she takes care of me every day and she does it because she loves me and not because she has to do it because she is a mother.

Andy R.
(no age given)

I think my mother is great! She cares about us, she loves us, cooks for us, wants to give us an education.... On Passover she even lets me find the afikomin! Mothers are good to have. They raise children for the family, too. She cleans the house. She greets company that comes to our house. She helps us when we need help and she does things with us. Mothers are good to have!

Jamey N.
Age 7

I think a Jewish mother is a mother who takes care of her children. A mother who takes care of her husband. A mother who worships God.... A mother who obeys the rules. A mother who helps all over the World. A mother who teaches her children ....A mother who always remembers lunch money for her kids. A mother who helps in UNICEF. A mother who always gives to the poor. A mother who will disiplin you.

Sam K.
Age 10

The Jewish mother is important to the family and religion. She cooks meals for the family and prepares everybody for the holidays. She gives you clothes and shelter. She also gives you things you want. She tells you whats right and wrong.

Howard S.
Age 11

Jewish mothers are special, very special. They make everything in your home a little more jewish. Hevenforbid you should go two hours with a cold, without a bowl of chicken soup, never. The house better be pretty clean by Friday or it just isn't Sabbath. And of course roasted chicken on Friday, why break up a nice monotony. Every other holiday you go to temple, and the only way you can get out of it, is if your about to die. Its realy not all that bad either. Because if you get tired she'll whisper to you, "Why dont you take a trip to the bathroom."

Judy R.
(no age given)

I am very proud of my jewish mother because she has care enough to even send me to Sunday School. Also on Jewish Holadays she feeds me matza ball soup and of course pizza. When we go to temple services when the sermon is so long she lets me go to the car early....

Donald B.
(no age given)

My mother makes my home Jewish by lighting the candles on Friday. She lets them burn untill they are out. We eat kosher food on Friday. On Chanuka she hangs up stars and puts presents all around the fire place.

Steve B.
Grade 6

A Jewish mother has a very difficult job. One hard thing she must do is to keep kosher. She is a very sincere Jew if she does because kosher foods are very expensive and buying these foods can hurt her family's budget. She should watch over the holiness of Shabbat and of all other Jewish holidays. This is a very complex duty, because there are many rules she must follow to each particular holiday.

But her main duty, greater than all the rest, is making sure her children love being Jewish. If a Jewish mother's children love being Jews, she will feel that she has succeeded as a good mother. But in order for her children to be good Jews she must go through many hardships. She should send her children to a Hebrew school where they will be around other Jewish children. She should see that they won't be embarrassed about Judaism when they are around non-Jews. After all of her difficulties and hardships; imagine how happy she will be if her offspring grow to be sincere Jews!

A Jewish mother will feel that Hashem has given her everything she wanted if her

children are earnest Jews. She will gladly help her children and go out of her way to do things that will benefit her children as Jews. She will feel a spiritual holiness among her family which arises from her children. When her children grow older and have their own families, she will rejoice as she sees them watching over their families as she did with them. She will know that all the things she did to be a good Jewish mother, were worth it.

David D.
Grade 7

My mother makes my home jewish by caring for the jewish religion... and working at the temple library and warming up our house by saying the blessing over the candles. And you can tell that she's proud of our religion because, when I start eating before she says the blessing over the hallah and she tells me to stop eating and I don't she'll send me to my room! I'm proud of my Jewish mother.

Jenny K.
Grade 6

...She keeps the house very holy for her husband and children.... She also has to watch and teach her children how to do things better. She teaches her girls how to do everything she does so when their older they can do the things she does. She is a good woman and teaches to her husband and children.

Ben S.
Grade 5

A Jewish Mother is a mother who has high hopes and wants you to be famous doctor, loyer or polatition. She also wants you to be respectabel, loyal, trustworthy, honest, brave, revrant and handsom.

Mike R.
(no age given)

My mom talks in yiddush and wants me to be honest, true, and a doctor. She also wants me to be a demacrat but I want to be a republican. That what makes my mother a "Jewish Mother."

Eric F.
Grade 6

There are several ways you can tell a Jewish home from any other. Most of these ways come from the mother. Number one, the phone is always tied up. This is caused by the mother and once in a while the children .... When you are ever having trouble, there is one person you can turn to, your Jewish mother.

B.G.
Grade 6

...She also is important to the religion because she raises a family that is mild mannered and could go to services at anytime they would like.

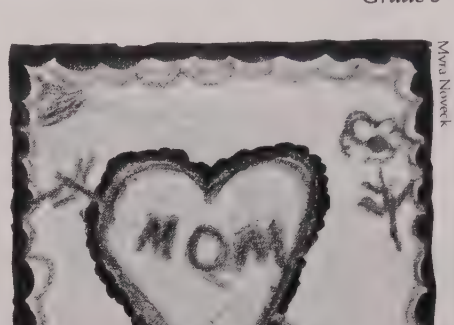
Jeffrey G.
Age 11

...She takes care of the family everyday. She gives up her pleasures to make pleasures for her children and husband. The Jewish Mother is an important Jewish symbol and is a tribute to the Jewish religion.

Andrea P.
Age 11

A Jewish mother is one that acts like a companion to man instead of a slave or servant. Who thinks she equal instead of an underclassman. She should talk out insted of holding her thoughts to herself. She should aply for a job if the money is needed. And also she should speak up for others when they need help or are in somekind of trouble.

Alan S.
Grade 5



Myra Noweck

...She works very hard. She doesn't talk mean. She isn't cruel. She is very smart and knows alot about Jewish history and about English history. She does alot of nice things for her family. She cares for herself and for all the other people, in her family or not.

Lee P.
Age 11

A Jewish mother is different from an other mother as she has the responsibility to bring her children up in the Jewish faith. *She* is the person that teaches her children the basics of a Jewish life when they are infants.... Also from the mother we get our first sense of our background. She tells us the stories of our past, making them interesting and exciting in her own way so we will remember them in years to come. Without these stories we may not have found out about our history until much later.

Mothers also have a very special charm for understanding our wrong-doings and teaching us the right way. She covers up our mistakes by reassuring us that we have not done a major crime, but we have learnt a lesson from them.

Jodi L.
Grade 8

A Jewish mother is a good Jewish mother when she has alot to give. My mother is this way.... When she has a party or something like that, and someone can't drive carpo she almost always volenteers. Then doesn't bother to let the other mother dr for her. She just says, "Oh, forget it!" When someone up the street needs to b row something, she always gives it to th if she has it.

Stacy
Age

...She has two helping hands in her wind for anybody....

Francine
(no age giv

...She should volenter at temple. She shou help other people that are ill in bed and ne help. My mother brings cookies or pur for our school parties and she always bri the best, sometimes homade. She helps J.C.C. of Dallas with bake sales. My gr grandmother is sick now. So she went the way out to Baylor Hospital to get h Right in the middle of fixing dinner. Tha what makes her a Jewish mother.

Peter
Age

My mother is like a jewish mother beca she cares enough to tell us about Israel a its problems and prepares chicken so when we're sick, and teaches me prayers She even wants to move to Israel. Whe get older she will let me go on the teen to

Brenda
Age

A Jewish Mother should partake in a few least different community and temple p jects (voluntary of course).... Beside housework it's nice to have a part time regular career, such as community comm ies or hospital work. It doesn't need to payable.

Andrea
Age

A Jewish mother should participate in te ple activities. She should also help the te ple. She should care about things. S should be understanding, and shouldn't mad easily. She should work hard at wh she does and should do it right.

Marie
Age

...Jewish mothers raise their children Jew and to care for the world....

Jessie
Age

The Jewish mother is probably the most portant member of the Jewish family. mother teaches me about my religion... Jewish mother through history kept the J ish Family from falling apart, through th and thin, through war's, death and h ship. Without them the Jewish relig would surely *die*.

Alan
Age

What is Ms. magazine and why is it saying all these terrible things?

"If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament."
Flo Kennedy talks "verbal karate" in **Ms.**

"Black family life will be a disaster if it copies white family life."
Eleanor Holmes Norton talks about black feminism in **Ms.**

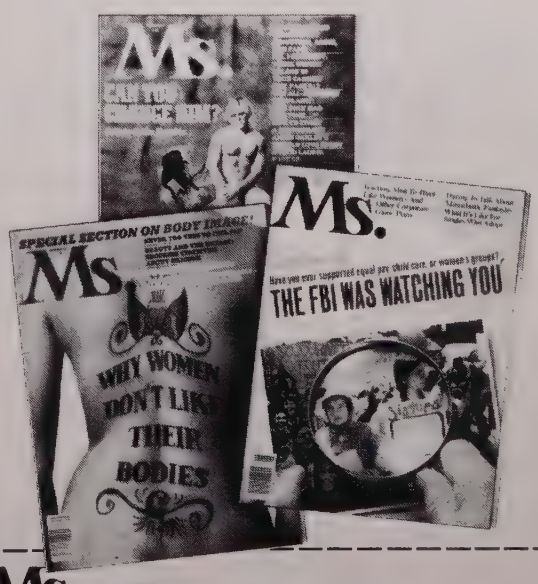
"When the female leaves the house to work for wages, she finds that she carries her inferior and servile status with her."
Andrea Dworkin, "Why Economic Recovery Will Not Work for Us" in **Ms.**

"Our pre-occupation with 'good-bad' sex threatens to turn us into a nation of emotional zombies." Ingrid Bengis, "How's Your Sex Life?" in **Ms.**

"Just as men victimize the weak member of the group, women victimize the strong one." Gloria Steinem on "Trashing" in **Ms.**

"Rape signifies that any woman...can be reduced by force or intimidation to the lowest common denominator—a free piece of ass."

"Men, with all their bravado, seldom have the courage to stick a flower on their desks."
Alan Alda, "The ERA: Why Should Men Care?" in **Ms.**



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POST-ELECTION BLUES

Begin's Victory—Feminism's Defeat

by Lesley Hazleton

"Courteous." The word is used again and again to describe Israel's new Prime Minister Menahem Begin. He indeed embodies that quintessentially non-Israeli quality—politeness. Not for him the cult of the casual so carefully promoted by previous governments; his style is formal—an easy formality, true, but nonetheless old-world and, in the Israeli context, charming.

This may be a refreshing change in some respects. But it also marks a return to old-world values regarding women.

Menahem Begin—a deeply religious man—is an advocate of the "women-and-children-first" principle. He often mentions the need to ensure that Israeli women and children won't be persecuted or slaughtered, that Israeli women and children will live in peace. The implication is that it is Israeli *men* who will ensure that this is so. The overtone is the old dictum that "man's function is to do, women's function is to be."

Actually, it is questionable to what extent these old-world values were ever rejected in Israel. For close to 30 years, Israeli Labor Party leaders have paid lip service to the principle of sexual equality; they had to, for it was part and parcel of Israel's official ideology, and an essential, if unspoken, part of the socialism that informed the politics of some early Israeli leaders. And it provided a positive image of Israel as being better than its neighbors. But even the lip service to equality faded into insignificance as the politics of pragmatism replaced the politics of ideology and as Orthodoxy came into its own.

Now Israel has a new government—the right-wing Likud government—with no socialist principles demanding even a nod of obeisance. Its commitment to women's equality is non-existent. Israeli women will certainly fare worse under Likud than under Labor, but how much worse is the question. Where Labor governments ignored women's rights to deal with "more pressing" issues for nearly three decades, the Likud government's policy will be based on three major determining factors: the perception of women, cited above, as helpless creatures to be defended, rather than active participants in their country's defense; the traditional Judaic view of women as the means of ensuring the sanctity of the home and the continuation of the Jewish people; and concern for fertility with women seen as the means of achieving a higher Jewish birthrate.

Begin has already given a clear indication of what the future may hold for Israeli women under his regime. The coalition a

Lesley Hazleton is a Jerusalem journalist whose book The Israeli Woman: Myths and Realities *is scheduled for publication by Simon and Schuster early in 1978.*

aeli feminists, women and men, in a 1976 demonstration favoring abortion on demand. The sign reads, "Develop contraceptives for men."

nent between Likud and Agudat Israel, ultra-Orthodox party, contains three nctly anti-women clauses. And perhaps nost disturbing thing about these clauses at Likud did not agree to them in order ompromise with Agudat Israel—there no conflict of interest or of principles iring compromise. All three points re- the Likud attitude, if not its declared cy. Likud promised Agudat Israel:

•that it would work to ensure hat "who is a Jew" be defined ac- ording to the full measure of *hala- hah*, (Orthodox) Jewish law;

•that women could merely de- lare themselves "religious" to get ex- mpted from compulsory Army ser- vice without having to provide any proof, as had been required in the past;

•that it would work to repeal the lause in the recently passed reform- ed abortion law allowing women le- gal abortions for social and economic reasons.

The "Who is a Jew" clause, while it affects both men and women, is an indication of a far more rigid observance of the religious laws of personal status (including marriage, divorce and conversion procedures), whose overall extreme sexism cannot be overstressed or excused by feminists in search of a personal mode of Jewishness [*see "Crimes Against Women in Israel" by Joanne Yaron in* Lilith, *Vol. I, no. 3*]. Parenthetically, the third coalition partner in the Likud government is the National Religious Party, which has long been the watchdog of the status quo on religious control of personal status.

The clause on exemption of religious women from the Army needs no Knesset (Parliament) approval and is already in effect. How big a change will it create? Probably very little. At present, only about half of Israel's 18-year-old women do their "compulsory" Army service. Nearly one-quarter are rejected because their educational level is too low. About 18% request religious exemptions, which the Orthodox support for reasons of "sexual morality." The percentage may increase by up to 5% but probably little more. The problem is not these women but the 25% who are rejected.

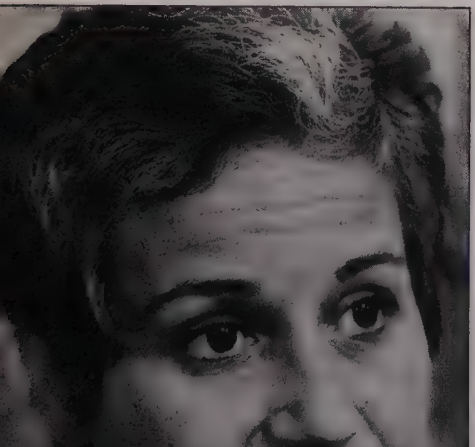
The promised repeal of the reformed abortion law is, in effect, a step backwards from half-a-step forward. Although the reformed bill extended the categories of women who were eligible for legal abortions, it did not imply the right to abortion on demand. To get abortions, women would still have to appeal to professional committees to plead a case rather than demand a right. Whether Likud will be able to force through the repeal is questionable, but since preparations to put the reformed bill into effect (it

becomes law in February 1978) have been practically nil, one could well question the relevance of the issue.

Generally, Israeli women can expect a more determined effort by the Likud government to promote higher birthrates. Demographically, Israeli Jews are in trouble. Population studies project that if Israel keeps the West Bank, the number of Arabs under Israeli rule will equal the number of Jews inside the Green Line (pre-1967 borders) by the turn of the century. The demographic problem is not new; Likud inherited it from its predecessors. 'Way back in the thirties, David Ben Gurion (later Israel's first Prime Minister) advocated that all Jewish women fulfill their "demographic duty" by having large families. Nowadays, this is known as "internal *aliyah*" (immigration). While it is doubtful that the experimental family planning clinics opened in the last two years will be closed down, it is possible that no funding will be made available for new clinics. The majority of Israeli women will thus continue to use primitive contraceptive methods backed up by illegal abortions (estimated conservatively at 60,000 a year).

Israeli women have had little to say about all this. There has been no widespread public dissent. Among the few voices of protest was that of Israel's fledgling feminist movement, numbering some 250 activists.

The movement's most effective action so far was the formation of the Women's Party by a dozen concerned feminists, among them then Knesset member Marcia Freedman. The Women's Party ran in the May, 1977 elections on a platform with planks on issues ranging from women's sexuality, recognition of housewives as professionals, children's rights, rape and prostitution to equal pay, women's legal status and education. The party garnered over 5,500 votes—well below the 18,000 needed for one seat in



Carol Gootter

rcia Freedman, ex-Knesset (Parliament) member.

Shulamit Aloni, an attorney who has battled for women's equal rights, addresses the Knesset.

the Knesset, but an astonishingly high number for so new and inexperienced a political party.

Nine women were elected to the Knesset from the other parties (down from 11 in the first Knesset). Among the *Ma'arach* (Labor-Mapam Alignment) women M.K.'s, two have become strong fighters for women's rights. One is Ora Namir, head of the Prime Minister's Commission on the Status of Women (belatedly set up by then Premier Itzhak Rabin as a gesture to International Women's Year). The other is Mapamnik Chaika Grossman, a hero of the Bialystock Ghetto Uprising. As chair of the outgoing Knesset's Public Services Committee, Grossman fought tooth and nail to get the reformed abortion law through the Knesset committees without having it shredded to pieces. Namir's and Grossman's experiences on the Commission and previous Knesset committees have considerably radicalized them on women's issues, but how much influence they can wield as members of the opposition remains to be seen.

The most radical of the women M.K.'s is Shulamit Aloni, a lawyer who is a relentless fighter for civic and civil rights and against religious coercion. Women's rights for her, are an integral part of this struggle. But Aloni (on whose Citizens' Rights Movement Freedman was elected to the previous Knesset) is now a one-member party in the Knesset and her power is limited.

In the anti-feminist camp stands Geula Cohen, the loud, gutsy Likud M.K. Cohen's style must be everything that Begin abhors —she is unruly, outspoken and hard to control. But she is a fervent supporter of *Gush Emunim* (the ultra-nationalist expansionist movement) and a firm believer in the right of the government to decide what is good and what is bad for the people. She is in firm agreement with Education Minister Zevulun Hammer of the National Religious Party on the need for more "Jewish values" in the classroom and on nipping in the bud the nascent spread of sex education in the schools, which is so badly needed.

Women Members of Knesset
Shulamit Aloni (Citizens' Rights)
Shoshana Arbeli-Almoslino (Labor)
Geula Cohen (Likud)
Sarah Doron (Likud)
Tamar Eshel (Labor)
Chaika Grossman (Labor-Mapam)
Ora Namir (Labor)
Sarah Stern-Katan (National Religious Party)
Hanna Weiss (Rakah, Israel Communist Party)

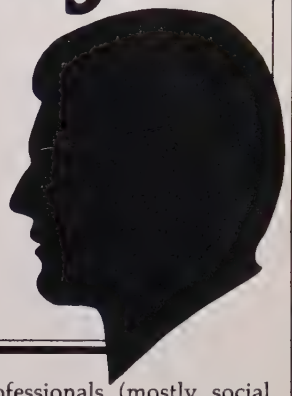
The report of the Prime Minister's Commission on the Status of Women is due out at the end of this year. Many of its recommendations will be, in the Israeli context, radical. But the chances of these recommendations being carried into practice—never high under Labor—are now that much lower with Likud in power.

There can be little doubt that the struggle for women's rights in Israel has suffered a setback. Israeli women had never had it as good as women outside Israel imagined. Now, it seems that the sparks of progress which appeared in the last few years may be stubbed out.

This may indeed happen, but it will be over the shouts and protests of a vociferous minority. ☰

The Jewish Establishment is NOT an Equal Opportunity Employer

by Amy Stone



QUIZ

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICE SWEEPSTAKES
How Far Behind Is Second Place?

1) 1 in 4 male professionals in Jewish community service earns over $30,000 per year. 1 in _____ women earns over $30,000.
a) 10 *b)* 50 *c)* 500

2) In a recent survey of the field, 29% of the men professionals were executives. _____% of the women were executives.
a) 0.8% *b)* 2.3% *c)* 11%

3) 22.6% of men in Jewish community service are lower-level workers. _____% of the women are at lower level jobs.
a) 24.4% *b)* 50.5% *c)* 71.5%

Answers: 1) c 2) b 3) c

What has long been suspected is now umented—women social workers and draisers are not treated as the equals of in professional Jewish community ice.

29% of the men working in Jewish com- nity service agencies are executives, but than 1% of the women. One out of ev- four men in Jewish communal service s over $30,000 a year, compared with woman out of 500. In the highest salary kets, over $40,000, it's men only.

Clearly, women are not wanted in the professional positions of Jewish com- nity centers, Jewish federations, Jewish ily and children's agencies, Jewish es for the aged and Jewish hospitals. For most men, lower-level jobs are con- red merely an entry point into the pro- ion. For women, these same jobs are re the majority remain.

All this emerged from a year-long study wing that when it comes to power and women professionals are very clearly riminated against. The study was done er the aegis of the National Conference ewish Communal Service (NCJCS), the fessional organization for workers in sh community agencies throughout th America. Founded in 1899, its mem- hip includes some 2600 individuals—roximately one-fourth women—from organizations.

The NCJCS's Committee on Opportuni- for Women in Jewish Communal Service d that not only are the men at the top riminating against women, but the atti- tude that women's place is at the bottom is so deeply entrenched in Jewish agencies throughout the U.S. and Canada that some women themselves accept the unwritten policy that they should not be in decision-making executive positions. Those few women who are executives are often paid lower salaries than men in the same positions.

The Committee on Opportunities for Women, consisting of approximately 15 women, many with decades of experience as professionals in Jewish agencies, collected data from 319 organizations covering 2,200 professionals. They concluded that "the appointment of agency executives is the culmination of a long process which has discriminated against women at every step from the earliest training stages to the final assignment to top positions."

Of those professionals (mostly social workers, including group workers and family counselors, social planners and fund-raisers), 54% were women and 46% men. According to the study, out of almost 1,200 women, 10 (0.8%) are executives; 45 (3.8%) are assistant directors; and 95% are in the two lowest levels, with 24% as supervisors or department heads and 71.5% as line workers. "In sharp contrast," the study found, "there is a fairly even distribution of men on the four professional levels." 29% of the men are executives, 23% assistant directors, 25% supervisors and 22.6% line workers. Not surprisingly, 95% of the women earn less than $20,000 a year, compared with 43% of the men.

Documenting women professionals' second-class status in Jewish community service agencies started five years ago with the NCJCS Ad Hoc Committee on Obstacles and Opportunities for Women chaired by Sara Feinstein, then secretary of the executive of NCJCS.

Among those most involved in the committee, diplomatically renamed the Committee on Opportunities for Women, are chairperson Toby Weiner, Jewish Community Center, Wilmington, Del.; statistical expert Sophie Engel of the Community Planning Department, Council of Jewish Federations, located in New York City; Bessie Pine, Jewish Welfare Board, New York City, and Sarah Lederman, of the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged in Queens, N.Y. (Agencies are given for identification purposes only—the women want it clearly understood that they are acting on their own, and not as agency representatives.)

The committee's findings were made public at the National Conference of Jewish

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y Stone is Senior Editor of LILITH.

d on reports by Helene A. Fisher and n Weidman Schneider.

Not surprisingly, 95% of the women earn less than $20,000 a year—compared with 43% of the men.

Communal Service annual meeting this past June in Washington, D.C. The Committee's report concluded that breaking down career barriers against women "will require a change in attitude, not only on the part of the men in the professional and lay positions of leadership, but also on the part of women in seeking and accepting positions of leadership."

According to one observer, the men attending the executive session, called by NCJCS president William Kahn to hear the committee's findings, reacted "with the fervor of repentant sinners." One man testified, "*I* have just hired a woman for a job that I would not have hired a woman for two years ago."

Both Kahn, who is executive vice-president of the Jewish Community Centers Association in St. Louis, and NCJCS executive director Matthew Penn have been pushing for action on the committee's findings.

Kahn, who is highly respected in the field of Jewish communal service, urged the men at the executive session, "Get this on your agendas...this whole issue must be faced head on...the executives are holding the marbles in this thing." He suggested "executive and lay-board awareness sessions" and called for an active, positive approach, "not just sending a list of women to the head of personnel."

Women involved with the report have reacted cautiously to the initial round of male support. Some feel that many of the men supporting advancement for women are not in positions where they do much hiring, or can effect change directly. They also fear that many men won't bother supporting equal advancement for women since they know that the volunteers—both men and women—accept the status quo. Committee members are also concerned that currently when women are hired for administrative positions, they are hired because they will work for lower salaries than men.

The most encouraging recent development is Kahn's appointment of Naomi Levine, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, as chairperson of the Commission on Equal Professional Advancement for Women in Jewish Communal Service. The commission will use the findings of the Committee on Opportunities for Women as the starting point for setting priorities and determining a course of action to combat the widespread discrimination.

Levine, one of only two women heading major American Jewish "co-ed" organizations, said she agreed to head the commission "because all the Jewish agencies, including the American Jewish Congress, talk very glowingly about commitment to equal rights for everybody, and I'd like to see some of that rhetoric translated into reality."

The General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, which convened in Dallas November 9-13, passed this resolution on "Equal Opportunity for Women in Executive Positions in Jewish Communal Service":

The experience and abilities of Jewish women professionally trained in the human services afford an incalculably valuable reservoir of skill and leadership for the Jewish communal service field. However, the potentials for the employment of women in top-level positions are far greater than have yet been realized, in spite of the pressing need for high-quality professionals throughout the field.

We call attention to a recent study conducted by the Committee on Opportunities for Women, of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service. The study's findings suggest an almost total absence of women at the middle and upper management levels in Federations...Jewish community centers, family agencies, hospitals and homes for the aged ....While this survey does not encompass the total scope of Jewish communal service, the coverage is sufficiently comprehensive, and the imbalance revealed so evident, as to merit serious concern.

The magnitude of our Jewish communal responsibilities requires that Federations and their constituent agencies take positive action to ensure equal opportunities for qualified women to advance to middle- and upper-management decision-making positions. We recommend the inauguration of efforts to seek and identify women of executive potential, and to provide them with career advancement opportunities in all fields of Jewish communal service in accord with that potential. We urge the support of volunteer and professional leadership toward these ends, both in the search and promotion processes.

She expects that the commission will number 25 to 30 members, at least half of whom will be male executive directors. Levine, a lawyer and a tough negotiator, said, "Maybe the agencies will adopt their own Jewish Equal Rights Amendment. My own idea is to meet with each agency individually, and if that doesn't work, go through the courts. I'm as abrupt and as harsh as that. I believe in very direct negotiations, though I don't know what the commission's approach will be."

One of those most involved in the committee's findings, Sophie Engel, feels that follow-up will have to take a two-pronged approach: "First, reach executives to deal with the situation. NCJCS is a membership organization of professionals, not agencies per se. Second, sensitize women to the need to become more conscious of career goals."

Direct follow-up may be necessary, as members of the Committee on Opportunities for Women are finding that the report alone is not enough to mobilize women to further their careers. Part of the problem is that women around the country don't immediately identify with the *statistics* of discrimination or may act in ways to limit their own advancement. In the words of one of the committee's early organizers, "Women won't move, won't relocate" (though hopefully this is a position that many women have moved beyond). Nevertheless, since the Washington meeting, according to committee member Jane Rogul, of UJA-Federation Joint Campaign of Greater New York, "Even women who have been around for a long time feel more confident now in taking steps to push for women's rights. For women in their late 50's and mid-60's, discrimination has already made an important difference in their pensions. Their involvement may reflect the fact that they themselves have suffered, professionally and financially, from discrimination against women in Jewish agencies."

The committee's next step in reaching women in Jewish community service agencies throughout the country is a newsletter to help build grass roots contacts in the push for change. Committee members Nancy Dallek and Jane Rogul have developed "Guidelines for Development of Local Task Forces" to evaluate the status of women in local Jewish agencies and plan for change.

Until the report from the Committee on Opportunities for Women in Jewish Communal Service, the issue of discrimination was debatable. With the clear-cut documentation of unfair treatment of women, the debate is over. Now it is up to the men—and the women—in these organizations to change some of their most basic modes of operation so that women professionals have the same opportunities as men.

Brown University News Bureau

Brown Women's Minyan members read the Torah. The new prayerbook grew out of the experience of praying in a women's congregation.

Selections from a Prayerbook where God's Image is Female

by Naomi Janowitz & Maggie Wenig

According to Jewish tradition, God has both male and female attributes. Yet, in most prayerbooks God is portrayed in exclusively male terms, and all the people referred to in the liturgy are men.

This distorted view of God influences the way men and women view themselves, their roles in Judaism, and even their relationships with God. As a result, women may participate in rituals, lead services, and even become rabbis, and yet still not view themselves as having been created in God's image.

To help rectify this situation, we have been working on a woman's prayerbook which emphasizes the feminine aspects of God and attempts to embrace our experiences as women.

Our book is an affirmation of our choice to remain within the tradition and to sanctify our everyday lives as women. Through our prayers we define ourselves as women in terms of our relationship with God and struggle with the meaning of this relationship. Our metaphors and ideas initially come out of a wrestling with the liturgy—trying to make it embrace our experience—rather than out of an effort to develop a systematic theology. In the process, we have arrived at concepts and interpretation which we can believe in, and through which we can pray.

In addition, our liturgy assumes the inclusion of women in the minyan *(quorum of worshippers), it assumes their full participation in the Torah service, it assumes that they will serve as "messenger of the congregation" and that they will recite the mourners'* kaddish. *It acknowledges their participation in these rituals by using their own words in the prayers and blessings they are to recite.*

The new prayerbook, excerpts from which are given below, consists of new translations of the Sabbath liturgy, traditional material—for example, midrashim *(legends)—not previously included in the prayerbook, and original material. For over six months the Brown University (Providence, R.I.) Women's Minyan has been using the prayerbook in its Saturday afternoon services. In this setting, isolated from men in worship, we are learning what it means to pray in and be part of a congregation of women.*

We have found that when women are reminded that they, too, are created in the image of God, they can bring forth what they carry inside—the beauty, wisdom and strength gained as the bearers of four thousand years of tradition.

Naomi Janowitz graduated from Brown in June as a religious studies major and is now a Master's Candidate at the University of Chicago's Divinity School. Maggie Wenig is a senior at Brown majoring in religious studies.

©NAOMI JANOWITZ AND MAGGIE WENIG, 1976

Lord our G-d, lay us down in peace.
Our Ruler, raise us up to life.
Spread over us a canopy of peace, guide us with wise counsel,
save us for Your Name's sake.
Shield us, remove from us all enemies, epidemics, violence, famine and sorrow....
Shelter us in the soft folds of Your skirt,
for You are our G-d, our protector and deliverer....
(*Hashkivaynu*)

Sovereign of the worlds.
Not because of our own righteousness do we plead before You
but because of Your wide and tender womb.
What are we? What is our life? What is our piety?
What is our righteousness? What is our salvation?
What is our strength? What is our power?
What can we say in Your presence?
Lord our G-d and G-d of our mothers and fathers,
are not the powerful helpless before you?...
The wise as if they had no knowledge
and the intelligent as though they lacked understanding?
For most of their words are empty
and the days of their lives are as vanity before You.
People are not above beasts, for all are mortal.
(*Le-olam Ye-hi*)

This new prayer is in the style of those written by Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev.

Ruler of the Universe
I, Sarah, daughter of Ruth, come before You as a mother.
When my child is sick I care for her
with all my soul and with all my body.
I use my arms to cradle her.
I use my lips to recite prayers for her.
I use my legs to fetch good foods to sustain her.
I use my voice to sing her soothing songs.
I use my hands to hold her close.
And You, who are the Creator of all flesh
and the Mother of Your people Israel,
What have You done to sooth Your children who are sick with longing for Jerusalem?
You have given us life and Your slightest movement would be enough to sustain and nourish that life.
How can You withhold that help
and not be shamed before Your children?

Blessed is She who spoke and the world became.
Blessed is She.
Blessed . . . who in the beginning, gave birth.
Blessed . . . who says and performs.
Blessed . . . who declares and fulfills.
Blessed . . . whose womb covers the earth.
Blessed . . . whose womb protects all creatures.
Blessed . . . who nourishes those who are in awe of
Blessed . . . who lives forever, and exists eternally.
Blessed . . . who redeems and saves.
Blessed is Her Name.
(*Baruch Sheh-ar*

That day the Lord saved Israel from the hand of th Egyptians
Israel saw the great power which the Lord used against them
and the people feared the Lord.
Miriam the prophetess took up her tambourine
and all the women followed her
dancing to the sound of tambourines
and Miriam led them with this song:

I will sing my praise to the Lord
To Her alone I will sing praise.
The Lord is my Mother, my Strength.
I will exalt Her all my days.

For She subdued the waves with Her might
And softened the sands with Her touch.
Her arm rescued the enslaved
And Her voice comforted our people in their despa

Women, gather timbrels, cymbals and flutes.
Make heard the glory of the Lord.
Wear your colors, ribbons, bells and gold
To honor the victory of our G-d.
Come barefooted, dance on the shore.
Send forth a song, Sing Hallelujah.

Sing praise to the Lord.
To Her alone sing your praise.

For the horizons cannot restrain Her power.
Nor the heavens contain Her radiance.
Her children cannot tire Her understanding.
And Her womb is deep and broad.

Sing, daughters of Israel, sing aloud.
For I still hear the crash of the waves
And the wailing of the Egyptian women
And my voice trembles.
I can only whisper before the wonder of my G-d.

So sing now, sing Her praise
Praise Her in the sight of Her power
Praise Her for Her mighty acts
Praise Her for Her overwhelming greatness
Praise Her with the blast of the horn
Praise Her with the timbrels and dance
Praise Her with strings and the pipe

Her with the clear-toned cymbals
Her with the loud-sounding cymbals
hat has breath praise the Lord.

will bring us in
ant us on Her own mountain,
e where She dwells.
l reveal Herself to us in a cloud of glory
l reveal Herself to speak to us.

w, my sisters
our salvation
e in G-d's presence
l be silent and still.
at is our song
voice of the Lord?

(*Az Yashir*)

ath of all life will bless Your Name. Lord, our G-d
rit of all flesh will glorify
lt Your Name, Our Eternal Ruler.
is world to the next You are G-d.
rom You we have no Ruler, Redeemer or Savior,
who sets free and delivers,
pports,
gentle in all times of trouble and distress....
beginnings and endings, G-d of all creatures,
all generations, You are adored in praises
d psalms.
ide the world with lovingkindness
creatures with tenderness.
rd does not rest and does not sleep.
kes up the sleeping
uses the stunned to repentance and to new life.
es speech to the mute, and freedom to
enslaved.
ports those who stumble and raises up those
o are bowed down.
thes those in pain and cradles the abandoned.
alone we give thanks.

(*Nishmat*)

be G-d who rested from all work on the
enth day.
se and sat on Her throne of glory.
apped the day of rest in beauty
led the seventh day a delight.
re, all creatures extol and bless G-d.
scribe excellence, glory
atness to G-d the Ruler, Creator of all
Her holiness bestows peace to Her people Israel
holy Sabbath Day.
ame, Lord our G-d, will be hallowed,
me, our Ruler, will be extolled in the heavens
ve and the earth below.

You are blessed, our Savior, for the excellence
of the works of Your hands,
and for the brightness of the light that You made
they will always praise You, Selah.

(*Le'El Asher Shabbat*)

You bring the sun from her place
and the moon from her dwelling place.
You light up the whole world and give light to its
inhabitants whom You created in Your womb.
In love You shed light on the earth
and those who dwell on it.
And constantly each day, Your goodness
renews the works of creation.
You alone, our Sovereign, will be exalted....
G-d of the world, in Your great womb we find love
for us....
You are our steadfast stronghold,
our saving shield,
and our secure shelter.

(*Hakol Yoduchah*)

With much love You have loved us, Lord our G-d,
with great and exceeding tenderness
You have been gentle to us.
Our Mother and Ruler for the sake of our foremothers
and forefathers,
who trusted in You,
because You taught them the laws of life,
be gracious to us and teach us also.
Oh, our Mother, the Mother, the Compassionate One,
the loving, show compassion to us,
shelter us in Your womb,
and help our hearts to understand and discern,
to learn and teach, to observe and practice
and to fulfill all the teaching of Your Torah with love.
Fill our eyes with the light of the Torah....
Bring us home in peace from the four corners of the earth
and walk us upright to our country
for You are the G-d who gives birth to salvation.

(*Ahavah Rabbah*)

Merciful G-d, as a mother shows compassion on her
children,
have compassion on us,
the people You have borne and sustained.
Remember the covenant and deliver us from evil.
Help us, the people who have been carried by You,
to direct our evil impulse towards good.
With grace deliver us
and with love answer our cry
for salvation and mercy.

(*Av Harachamim*)

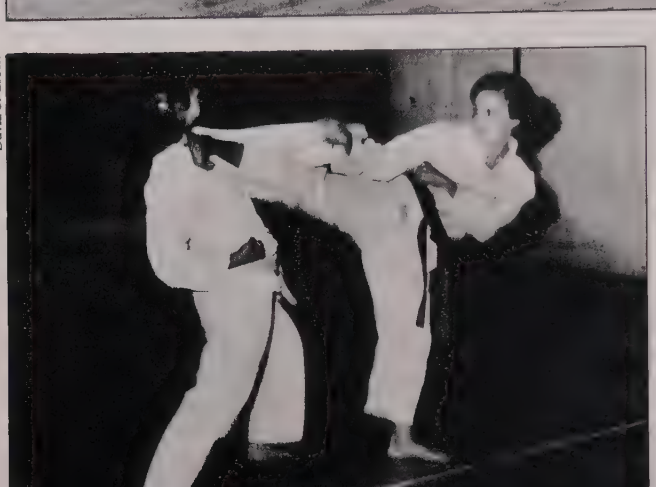
Border by Joan Mesznik

KARATE

Photographed by David S. Green & Layle Silbert

Layle Silbert

David S. Green



Lillian demonstrates a mov which involves grabbing th attacker's punch and pullin it into her kick. She ex- plains that one of women's best defenses on the street is the element of surprise.

Throwing Off the O

by Chana Forse

"Upper block, punch, knife hand to the head, front kick....Upper block...."

The stiff white uniforms rustle and snap as the young Jewish women inside them strain to respond to their teacher's calls. Their faces are rapt with concentration, their bodies drip sweat. "Upper block, punch...."

These women are students of the Tora Dojo Association, a Jewish Karate system, which holds classes at synagogues and yeshivas in the New York metropolitan area and Israel. Many belonged last year to an all-female club run by the Association at Stern College, Yeshiva University's undergraduate school for Orthodox Jewish women, in New York.

Chana Forse is Assistant Editor of the Women's American ORT Reporter.

When the club was discontinued th semester for technical reasons, many st dents continued learning Karate at the Up per West Side dojo (school) of the Assoc ation, located at the Jewish Center on We 86th Street. Other women, some quite a vanced in their study of this martial ar have been studying Karate at the West Si dojo alongside men for several years.

Karate, which originated centuries ag in the Orient, is a demanding disciplin Classes at the Tora Dojo on the West Si are held twice a week for three hours at stretch, and students are expected to practi at home. Most of the women are white belt (which roughly translates as beginners) ar yellow belts (the next grade). There are ni women green belts, two purple belts, ar one brown belt (one step away from t black belt worn by an expert Karateis Lillian Andron.

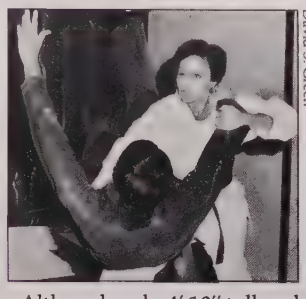
Lillian, who was the teacher at the Ste College dojo, is 4'10" tall and weighs

Judaism, emphawork as the route nding. TDA stusix hours of class and are encouragce every day.

David S. Green

Brown belt Lillian Andron he most advanced woman Karateist in the Tora Dojo, Jewish Karate system, and is adept at moves such as this side kick to the head.

Layle Silbert



David S. Green

Although only 4' 10" tall and 90 pounds in weight, Lillian is able to throw Black Belt Michael Andron, her husband and the teacher at the TDA.

Students at Stern, Yeshiva University's College for Women, practice *kata*, a dance-like series of blocks, kicks and punches that is described as the "soul of Karate."

ushover" Stereotype

ds. She is the smallest woman in the , yet two brown-belt men could not er off her feet when she demonstrated echnique called "rooting." Nobody in ojo doubts her capacity to throw to oor a man twice her weight. Lillian is ied to her Karate teacher, Michael on, a fifth-degree Black Belt in the Tora Association and the *Sensei* (teacher) e West Side dojo. Lillian and Michael a one-year son, Benjy, who often at- Karate classes as an observer.

llian first began studying Karate when, actress, she felt the need to gain conver her body. A closer look at her life ls that she is the daughter of a survivor e Warsaw Ghetto and was born 30 ago in a D.P. camp; she was brought w York at the age of three. Lillian ex-ed about the Jewish Karate style and DA:

We're training Jews to realize that they apable of actively defending themselves e face of violent attack." The TDA, which has no political affiliations, is the largest Jewish Karate organization. It is under the direction of Master H.I. Sober, a First Level Grandmaster in the Kempo system with 20 years' experience (equivalent of Eighth Degree Black Belt). The TDA, said Lillian, "merges the highest training standards with a vigorous Jewish spirit," teaching Karate as both an art and science and "stressing physical and mental discipline."

When Lillian first began studying Karate five years ago, she made few of the spiritual connections to the discipline which excite her so much today. "Judaism and Karate live together quite well," she said. "The Torah wants us to lead healthy and disciplined lives. Karate teaches us the dynamics of safety....And both emphasize hard work as the route to understanding."

When Lillian taught the women at Stern, she often held rap sessions during class. At one session, the students discussed with her how Karate relates to their being female.

"Being a woman is like wearing a *yarmulkah*," said Lillian. "You're constantly being stereotyped as a pushover. As Jewish women, we find it difficult to see ourselves as capable of being aggressive on the street if it becomes necessary, because our traditional role is more family-oriented and sheltered. But Judaism gives women a positive self-image, and the role of educating the children. This affirmation of our importance is an attitude we can take with us onto the street."

Like other brown belts, Lillian often teaches white belts at the West Side dojo, under Michael's direction. She is one of few brown belts allowed to teach *kata*, a dance-like sequence of blocks, punches and kicks, a "moving meditation" which is the soul of Karate. Lillian said that her method of teaching Karate to women is the same as for men. She does, however, place particular emphasis on using the hips for power, and added that "one of women's best street defenses is the surprise element: men don't expect women to be able to fight."

What prompted the women at the Tora Dojo to study Karate? Most of the women, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, had difficulty in articulating what had drawn them to the discipline and some attempted to dismiss it as stemming from a desire to lose weight or become better coordinated. One Orthodox woman said:

"Our bodies are on loan to us. What will the Almighty say if we return them in lousy shape, when we received them in good condition?" Said another: "I came to this class to learn about *middat gevurah*, the attribute of strength in the world. The prayers describing G-d as a warrior Who gives us strength suddenly became meaningful in Karate when I began to feel strength and energy course through my body....I'm learning how to channel that energy to help myself and others, and I'm recognizing more and more what it means to be a vessel for the Life of the Universe."

While few of the women students discussed their feelings about being vulnerable or of becoming assertive, one confided that she was "terrified" of the streets and subways of New York and "sick of being so totally defenseless, of always being a potential victim." She continued:

"Several years ago, when I became a feminist, I took a self-defense class, but I realized that if I really wanted to defend myself I'd have to study Karate seriously. Now I see women in the dojo who leave no doubt in my mind about their ability to take care of themselves, and I have hopes of emulating them.

"All the talk about controlling our bodies—it's just empty talk if we cannot prevent ourselves from being attacked or hurt, or worse," she continued. "As I begin to get some control over my body, I begin to control my own life.

"Karate has changed my perception of what is possible."

Lilith Interview

Esther Broner

by Shebar Windstone

Esther Broner, writer, playwright and teacher at Wayne State University, is the author of several works of fiction and drama that draw deeply on the experiences of Jewish women. Among them [see box for publishers and dates] are Summer is a Foreign Land, Journal/Nocturnal and Seven Stories, Her Mothers, *and* The Stolen Legacy: A Women's Haggadah *(with Naomi Nimrod). Her latest work of fiction,* A Weave of Women, *is scheduled by Holt Rinehart to appear in May 1978.*

Shebar Windstone, writer, artist and bibliophile, works for Pacifica radio in Berkeley, and authored a bibliography of out-of-print books and pamphlets about women.

Robert Broner

SHEBAR: What were the various influenc on you—both your life and your writing literary influences and otherwise? Did t *mayseh*, the Jewish tale, influence you?

ESTHER: Oh yes, Shebar. When I was ve little my father was my Sunday-scho teacher, which was both an embarrassme to me and a great piece of luck. He w translating the Singer brothers; he tran lated them long before they were translat or before they were publicly distributed. that as a little girl in Sunday school, there was with these noisy dreadful unappreci tive children, hearing my father's transl tion of Singer and of the Jewish tale; a with the knowledge that things did not b come happy ever after: the prince does n go away with the princess, the apple is n dislodged from the throat. In the Yiddi tale, the apple is always stuck in the gulle I thought about that land of the Yiddish tal and out of that came my first work, *Sur mer Is a Foreign Land* and many stories *Journal/Nocturnal. Her Mothers* uses tal too. And the *mayseh* is still very importa to me in the new book that I'm working o

I think we all start with a kind of ethn sentimental tale. Most people start writi that way about themselves. You make legend of yourself. And you have to do th before you can really make fictions of oth things. *Summer Is a Foreign Land* is abo my grandmother, who became a legenda character in the play that I wrote. —A now I don't know which is my grandmoth and which is the legend I've invented. It's book about the power of a grandmoth who is both a power for good and mayb for mischief, and believes that she has i herited certain powers from an ancesto and can also pass on this power. All of thi of course, is part of my own family legen I would never think of something so outr geous as fiction.

The thing that excited me in writing was that in the cold snow of Russia, she w a passionate and useful woman; and in t overheated four-family flats of Detroit, s felt that she lived in summer, and that sum mer was a foreign land. And everyone i nored her as she became older, but, as h end came, her children began courting he begging for her to pass on this magic whi they'd ridiculed to their children—each be ging, one for the daughter that she cou find a good boy, one for the grandson th he should finish medical school. And she nally uses it selfishly, in a really sweet a lovely way. And she's a good lady: s fights death off, which I think we all have do daily, if not actually.

Summer Is a Foreign Land says ve passionate things. It cries, it screams, it gi gles, it makes connections between siste who are cooking and spreading the dou and making strudel. But it does things tha don't do so much anymore: it honors t grandson and not the granddaughter. T granddaughter gets married, and there a

eral songs sung to her—and she's kind of diot who only thinks about pink-and-te flowers and pink-and-white dresses matching flower girls. The grandson a longer line. But this was 1966.

EBAR: How did you come to write Jour-Nocturnal?

HER: *Journal/Nocturnal* came out of her kind of feeling, and another time in life. And it came out of the Vietnam and a sad realization of what a woman She was sort of *tabula rasa*. She was totally passive person, and whoever essed her body possessed her mind. My acter keeps a daytime life and a night-life going simultaneously, never seri-y questioning herself about who she y is—is she the one that runs between lives? In the daytime she's a dutiful wife she agrees with her husband, who is nst the war. At night, she is a cat that ns; she has a lover of another religion of another political viewpoint, and she es—just as sincerely, just as wholly, him. It had to do with the fact that our try didn't know what it was doing, that as split, and that women didn't take rol of their lives, either. It is a strange but, I think, I felt that way about the of women in 1968.

EBAR: That's just a part of the book. It's a number of short stories. For me, be-the woman's viewpoint—and, specifi-, the Jewish woman's viewpoint, which rd come by in fiction—it was important e for its discussion/exploration of Jew-Negro relationships in the United States.

HER: Yes. It was very important to me. "*was*" because, sadly, we limit our-es and our concerns, and my concerns are of my body and of what I call my e land, which I think of as Israel. So I less and less energy for other battles. he Jewish-Black relationship was a both ult and sweet relationship, both tenta-and exploring, both distant and very rent and very close; it was a relation-that enriched and was important to sides, even though now we're some-t asunder.

Now, I think, we stereotype each other. Blacks think of Jews as slumlords, and ey think of Israelis they think of them as ressors. The Jews think of Blacks as ess people in cities, unemployed. Some-g very sad has happened. What's im-ant—that which was important to each , the other finds unimportant. To the ks, having jobs, and having *real* law order, in which the police did not per-te the Blacks, in which they were not ved, in a sense, to hurt each other, h is how most crime had occurred—after all, I live in Detroit, so I'm very aware of crime—that was not very important to the Jews, that particular fight. And the Jewish fight for their identity and their homeland was something quite alien and unimportant to the Blacks. So the justice that the Blacks searched for, and the roots that the Jews searched for—each of these was unimportant to the other. And I think that that has split us apart. Those early stories did deal with that tentative, painful, sometimes shameful, but at least civilized attempt to reach each other from different cultures. And sometimes it was very successful. Sometimes we died for each other—if that's success, I don't know. I think that we're not reaching for each other at all any more, but I hope it happens again.

SHEBAR: In Journal/Nocturnal what stereotypes led you to put your anti-war involvement into the male character?

ESTHER: That's a really good question. I felt freer writing as a man. This book was written in 1968. I had written another book earlier (or was it after?), called *The Jewish Viking*, which I could not place. Again I was a man. I could free myself more as a man, I thought; I didn't know yet how freeing it was to make your own self-data.

In one very hard section for me in *Her Mothers*, the woman looks in the mirror and sees what society would see, and she has to see herself as society would see her: the breasts, the hair that grows around the nipples, the thick patch of pubic hair, maybe stretch-marks... She doesn't think of it as a useful body. I used to go to the bathhouse in Jerusalem, and I discovered that there were all these arms and legs walking up and down stairs—fat, skinny, they were eating *borekas*, cheese-filled pastries, they were lying on the roof in the sun, and that these bodies were of many sizes and shapes, with markings, without markings. All were doing the same things, and they were doing them wonderfully well. But, when we judge ourselves, and our nipples become those strange eyes of society looking at ourselves in the mirror—ach!, we're so full of defects, it's Gulliver and the Brobdignags! Oh, the breasts are so hideous! The hair on the chin! We can never be beautiful enough, Shebar, if we look at ourselves as others see us.... I think that earlier I felt stronger if I dealt with my adventures and my passions as a man. But now, I write as a woman, and adventures befall my women.

I'm writing a book now about women: they talk about themselves, their pains, their connections, sometimes they talk about men—I mean, we're in the world together, we love each other, we dislike each other, we love women, we dislike women—but it cannot be that a woman's world revolved around a man, just as it would be absolutely stupid for a man's world to revolve around a woman or around women in general. So my women talk about many things: they talk about ceremonies, and holidays, about making exodus. They have special ceremonies with each other. A baby girl is born: on the eighth day, which is the time of the circumcision, they pierce the baby girl's hymen—there's a hymenotomy, so that all orifices are open, so that she will be delivered intact to no man. We must be delivered with experience, or we must not be delivered. There must not be some terrible piercing that occurs to us late in life, that causes us to bleed uncontrollably. They have other ceremonies. They light candles, and they pray to the Lady of the Candle—Friday night. They have a ceremony in overcoming passion, if that passion makes them forget themselves and each other.

SHEBAR: Shall we talk about the "Exodus" and Her Mothers?

ESTHER: How did that come about? I knew a thin, strange lady who was making movies and doing things that I thought were quite hysterical. And one day she said to me, "I had six mothers." I thought she said, "I had *sick* mothers!", I didn't understand; and she said, "No, my father married frequently: I had six mothers!" I began thinking about this woman, and her mothers, and how she was disconnected from them.

And I thought of something else that had happened when I was living at UCLA: I had a room-mate who became pregnant fairly late in life and called her mother, who was a simple woman, and she said, "Mother, I'm pregnant!" And the mother said, "Have a girl." And my friend said, "Why should I have a girl?" And the mother said, "A girl should have a girl." Well, I started laughing, and I did not understand why I was laughing, and periodically, through the years, I would repeat that line. But I think what the mother said was that there is a special connection between the mother and the daughter: the same body being reproduced, the same problems that will face you that will be quite different from the problems facing the young man. There is such a connection: the fingertips meet, the eyes connect, the heart leaps! You may cause each other unbelievable pain and sorrow and, hopefully, joy. And I think I had to write about that search for that disconnection, that pain that we cause, and, hopefully, the joy that we can also bring to each other.

SHEBAR: In Her Mothers there's the main character as a mother, and her mother, and her grandmother in some places and her friends' mothers, and her friends becoming mothers....

ESTHER: Yes, yes. The woman is trying to find out what it is to be a mother. You know, we're not really taught what it is to mother or to be a mother. We are really

taught: "Here, you have a doll, you're going to grow up and—poof!—you're going to give birth to a Barbi and it's not going to hurt you or anything, 'cause she's made of plastic and it's gonna slide right down." We're not taught how to mother and how to care and how to connect. And this woman had to *learn* very painfully—because she was very disconnected in every way—how to connect to other women and, most of all, to herself. And then, to connect to her daughter, because the women had very painfully disconnected from each other.

SHEBAR: Did you write your Haggadah after *Her Mothers*?

ESTHER: Yes. I wrote the Haggadah in 1975 with Naomi Nimrod in Haifa. We are both women who have had religious upbringings. Hers is much more intense than mine, but everyone in Israel—religious and atheist alike—is enormously informed on their cultural past. Naomi, who had been raised in B'nei Akiva, the religious youth movement, whose father was a cantor, whose mother was a profoundly religious woman, found out that her religion had no use for her. And that was unbearable for a religious woman of great passion. For myself, it isn't enough to be Esther or E.M., there have to be great, surging, epic events that occur; I have to connect myself to some kind of passion which is beyond the bed and anger. But if our religion would like to kick us out of it, I think that we have to carefully elbow our way back in and make a new tradition. Rewrite ourselves and correct that tradition....

SHEBAR: But the Jewish religion is a patriarchal religion in which women have no place! Except for maybe a few isolated groups here and there around the country, you can't be counted in a *minyan*, you won't be a rabbi or a—

ESTHER: Wrong, wrong! Wrong! Wrong!

SHEBAR: —cantor, or you can't dance with—

ESTHER: Wrong! Wrong, wrong wrong wrong wrong wrong! The Reform women have been in *minyanim*, the Conservative movement now has women in the *minyan*. There are many women rabbis. Do you know that a third of the class at [the Reform] Hebrew Union College in Israel are girls? The Orthodox will not change, I think, although I don't know—I have Orthodox friends in Israel, deeply, deeply Orthodox women, who also want what I want, dignity and a share....

On my parents fiftieth anniversary, the synagogue honored them in the morning, because they're very active in it. The rabbi there is a very reactionary rabbi. My sons were called up to read from the Torah, my two brothers, my husband. "Mom," I said, "Daddy, I want to go up and honor you. I want to read, too. I can read Hebrew as well as they." The rabbi would not allow it. I thought of not going to the synagogue to honor them, but my brothers said, "You would only hurt your parents." And so I went, but I didn't stay for the whole time. But I will go up there, I will be a priest, I will dance. I will not be elbowed out of my religion. There's room. I have to turn it around; we have to rediscover our mothers. It's a political thing.

But, on the other hand, there are an awful lot of gutsy, mouthy Jewish women! I mean, they were very active in forming the whole women's Movement! How did that happen, out of this patriarchal religion? Several things: we were never really dishonored and disgraced. There *was* some dignity given to us. You're just not allowed to have the source of power! And you ashamed of your body. But we will chan things. It's only been a few thousand yea

SHEBAR: Could you say more about ho you wrote the Haggadah?

ESTHER: I think the interesting thing writing it was that working with women quite different from collaborating with m —and I've done both. Women allow life enter their work; men carefully remove l from their work. When Naomi and I we working, every day we would speak first our lives, and then we would speak abo the research that we had to do. We did n separate one from the other.

Naomi was bearing a child; we spoke that. She had made a political decision n to marry; her mother, who was a religio woman, was very upset about that. But

tely, because Naomi's late father had a library, we decided to work in her ıer's house. And the mother, at first up- t seeing her pregnant daughter, seeing ıter to work on this strange—maybe ligious—thing, became more and more ested in it. Her name was Rivka, and Haggadah is dedicated to her, because ıourished us in more ways than one. from great worry that we were break- ules, she became quite militant!

Ve asked her to help us look for photo- hs of women who had made the Exo- and she went to the Maritime Museum aifa, and said, "I would like old pictures e sea"—art-work depicting the Exodus nd if there are any prints, especially of ıen, like Miriam the prophet." And the ivist said, "Oh, madam! There are no s of women crossing the sea! What do mean?!" And she said, "Sir! If women 't cross the sea, you wouldn't be here y!"

She also, with Naomi, took this women's ature class that I was teaching. She e every week, she read all of the assign- ts, she spoke up about Doris Lessing's *The Summer before the Dark*, where older woman has to make some kind of ngement with life when she is no longer led by children or husband. Rivka e about that—that problem was very e to her. One day I said, "Mothers, have earned anything from our daughters?" use we were always talking about what ad learned from our mothers. And Riv- aid, "I learned a new tolerance for life ı my daughter." They had not been able lk to each other before this.

n the course of our writing of the Hag- h, which was several months, Rivka a heart attack. We were in the middle ıe introduction, which we wrote after l finished the first draft, and we rushed ıe hospital with her. And we just finish- when she died. She, I think, lived with o make her own final exodus.

BAR: How did you feel as a woman in l?

HER: Wonderful, Shebar, *wonderful*! I r felt so good as a woman! I was teach- women—we formed such a strong rela- ship in the six months of this class that, ı though these women ranged from 20 r the Army) to 60, and politically from ımunist to Land-of-Israel-Intervention- nd reactionary, from religious to athe- ve found out that within six months we everything in common—everything! made such a tight and loving union that as a kind of sacred thing. We didn't even w if we should greet each other after , we said such intense and painful and aling things in class.

sraelis are very formal, they're not erican Glib Autobiographical. I'd asked ı to write about their insanity, and we were reading Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*, and I said, "Now you write about *your* insanity." "Oh," they said, "what do you mean? Only the weak are insane." One or two religious women said, "You can will yourself not to be insane!" I said, "Nonsense! Every day we are insane." Well, that was a hard assignment for them; they could not write about that. (Later I learned they would write about assignments long after, that they couldn't write about them at the time I'd asked them to write.)

Finally, one woman rose, and said "I am insane. My husband left me this weekend, and I went to his apartment. And I stood there—he took my dog Whiskey—and I stood outside his door calling to Whiskey for two days and two nights. I never went to bed; I never washed. And then Whiskey leapt out of the window into my arms, and I went home and bathed, and came to class. My friends told me, 'If you tell the class, they'll lock you up, they'll say you're insane!'—I am insane, class!" said she. And there was a great pause. No one had really said anything to anybody; we'd been in class for weeks. And one woman who'd suffered a very humiliating divorce said to her, "You weren't insane! It wasn't Whiskey you were calling... we've all had terrible losses." Afterwards, the women knew what it was to be insane. Then we could write about it.

That embracing, that touching, that loving, that kissing—that's an amazing thing! People don't have time to do this in a cold climate: we have winter in our hearts and in our bones here. In Israel, I was meeting women all the time, and they try pioneering hard things to do. It's very hard to leave one's land to go to another land, to learn a language, to try to forget death camps, to escape a South American dictatorship—that's what all these people were doing, trying to make a life. So... there were hardships—real hardships. And yet they were very brave.

It's still a family society. It is a society that's so beset by war that it's always thinking, desperately, about replenishing itself. That's very hard on the women, in a way, because it always returns them toward their biological role rather than to any kind of expanding role. All the women in Israel are pregnant. The soldiers were given leave to make sure that the women were pregnant. I can't condemn that, though: so many young men are killed. What I do think would be very good is for the women to go into the front lines. I think women are as brave as men—and I know they're braver, in fact! And as skilled. And they would have to be less coy; they would not have to stay at home, waiting for the visitor; they could be there as the warrior. That's a very different role.

But I loved being a woman! My body felt wonderful to me! The sun was on it, even during the winter. I wore fewer and fewer clothes, I felt more and more voluptuous, more and more aware of my skin, the way you do in summer. I protected myself less and less from emotion. It was the first time where I felt so mobile—and I was living there with part of my family (after a while my daughter showed up; my husband was with me also, teaching).

But I would get a call from Tel Aviv, from a wonderful friend, a singer, having a very hard time as singers do everywhere on this earth, for we are bound to still the notes that rise above ours—and she would say, "Come to me! My heart hurts." Well—if, here I am in Detroit, if someone in Chicago or Cleveland says, "Come to me, my heart hurts," I would say, "Oh, gee, do you think you could manage for two or three months? I mean, I could probably get away during the Thanksgiving break or something!..." "Oh," I said, "Arrella, I'll come to you!" And I'd make this very arduous trip! Now, if people say "Come to me," in New York or somewhere else, I *do* go to them.

So, you are freer to love each other, because it's a land that loves. It's less clothed. They stare, with enormous interest as well as with arrogance and conceit, and concern. It's a very open kind of society. I felt *very* good being with women, and I was almost exclusively with women. But it was a time of having a very rich and wonderful society of women, and out of it I wrote a really good play, "The Body Parts of Margaret Fuller," that won a nice award, so it was lovely that women had even given me this.

SHEBAR: Do you want to say more about women writers?

ESTHER: You know, one comes late—or I came late— to women writers. I *loved* Willa Cather when I was in graduate school. I read all of her books and all of the existing research, criticism, on her, which was really quite limited. You couldn't even get her books in paperback! She was very important as a model to me. In *Song of the Lark* she said, "Career is hard work. Career takes courage, and enormous intelligence, and hard work." I learned from Willa Cather about work. And yet, you know, when I wanted to do a large paper on her, I was told, "well, she's a second-rate novelist because she didn't know how to handle men." But, you know, think about Hemingway—he couldn't handle women; think about Bellow, the greatest stylist—he knows nothing at all on this earth about women, despite the Nobel Prize! So we really have quite a double standard in judging literary worth....

It took a long time to discover the women, and it took a long time for them to come out, too! Tillie Olsen, for example, coming out very recently. Many women are just getting courage now. But women poets have taught me for years. They said, "This is my body," and they pointed to the places in their body that were just like the places in my body, and they pointed to the places in their hearts that were like the places in

my heart. And, lo and behold, we had the same map! That is an amazing thing—you can't always go over the desert by yourself. The children of Israel wandered for 40 years because they were *stupid*. You have to say, "Which way is north? Which way is south? Which way is pain, and which way is joy?" And women writers have provided me with that model.

SHEBAR: Do you want to say more about the Haggadah, about what that came out of and what uses it's had, what the response to it has been?

ESTHER: The male response to it is very angry. The women are a little nervous, some of them. Some women brought me in to New York last Passover to make an exodus, the group consisted of about 19 women—I think eleven were Jewish, the others weren't, the group was lesbian and heterosexual. I asked them to come with the tales of their own exodus. I was just exhausted from cooking for the holidays for my family; I said, "Women cannot wear themselves out for each other. Let us come with salads, and fruits and nuts, and let us carry our tales."

And when it began, I said, "We are making connections with our mothers. Who are your mothers? Let's go around the room; please give me the names of your mothers." They gave us their names, and then their mothers' names—which were often different from their names. "What were your grandmothers' names?" Many of them didn't know; their grandmothers' names were lost. It was really an objective lesson in how separated society makes us, *forcefully*, from our mothers and our grandmothers, by giving us such different names.

Then I asked, "Who are your *real* mothers?" One woman said: her art teacher at the Art Students' League. Martha Graham was somebody's real mother. A few husbands were mothers! Some of the women were each other's mothers! Some of the women had never had any mothers, had no idea what it was to mother or to be mothered.

We followed the form of the male Haggadah, only we replaced the male prophets with the original female prophet, Miriam. And I said, "She was our prophet!" and I told the tales—and we had to dig deep for those tales. We looked for women, who were not mentioned in the Haggadah, but who had lived at the same time that the men who are in the traditional Haggadah are mentioned, and we traced their lives.

It was very painful, what we discovered; we had no idea when we were writing, Naomi and I, that we would find out the things we found out. We had no idea that we had been so hated, and for so long. But you have to know *not* to be embittered; you have to know, yes, to be horrified, and angry, and then to use that. If you say, "I was hated, and I hate back," it's a crippling step. You have to say, "I was hated"; you have to trace that back: how terrified they were!; what were they terrified *of*? They were terrified of our blood; they were terrified of our wombs; they were terrified that we gave birth. Maybe they thought that we could also kill. They suppressed our magic. After all, Tsiporah, the first wife of Moshe, knew magic, knew special rites that she learned from her father, who was a priest; she performed rites, but they are written about very cryptically in the Exodus—we don't exactly know what she does, but we know that it refers back to a special blood rite. She touches Moses' feet to save him from the Angel of Death, and she touches his feet with blood, maybe circumcision blood—we're not sure, it's not clear, but something very curious is happening. Women *were* the first priestesses....

I said, "They are the traditional plagues—and I identify with those plagues. But I have my plagues; and we as women could identify with those plagues," and I wrote some; and I said, "Please give me your plagues," and the women went around the room and talked about that which plagued them.

There's a section in the Haggadah where I said, "These are the promises that the Lord kept: He led us over the Red Sea, and He gave us manna, and He gave us, most of all, the great land." I said, "Ah, but He did not keep the promises to women. What are the promises that were not kept?" and all of the women had tales....

I think when we make ceremony together, Shebar, we are more connected to each other than through just quick, easy conversation. I'm doing something that's thousands of years old, that people every year sit down and do. There must be something to draw us back into that earth—it's a symbolic holiday, and we've all made some kind of exodus.

SHEBAR: Is there any need to say any more than what you've said about being a Jewish feminist and about a sort of growing Jewish feminist sense of community?

ESTHER: We, I think, are becoming conscious of being Jewish for the very sad reasons that Jews have always been conscio of being Jewish: it's a heightening time anti-Semitism.

When Arafat appeared at the U.N with gun, I was alone. Well, "alone" is funny word, but I felt alone, at MacDow Colony, a writer's retreat. It was evenir we were getting ready for dinner, there w one small television set in a little room, pe ple were waiting for the election retur and I saw Arafat on television. I was only one that cared! There were one or t Jews in the group who were not terribly terested in this sort of thing. The Christia didn't realize what was happening, wh Arafat appeared; they didn't know wh happened to my soul! It was unbearab Only I, I felt, could connect to those w trembled and had ancient memories of po roms instilled into them. It's like the Bla child who is taught always to know, and sense the white person's mood and ang and always treads with some caution in t world of the white person. So the Jew trea very cautiously in the world of the non-J —which is most of the world.

If Jews are discovering each other, if dance together, and make ritual together may be because we are afraid that anoth Holocaust is upon us. I worry about tha lot. It does not to me seem so unlikely think the world is being very carefu trained to think of us as disposable. Cars a disposable, diapers are disposable, bott are disposable—really, Jews are also d posable.

I think that you connect to the peo that you are afraid will be destroyed, w are like you. You connect to people w have the memories that you have. Tha why women are doing things together.

Now, how connect myself as a wom with my own sense of body as well as so sense of land? I cannot go in and say t prayers that are the traditional praye either at Yom Kippur or at the other ho days. I can't pray to a male god. I have n own name for God—I call Her the *Shec nah*, the female spirit of God. I think I ha to say that some parts of the Bible are sex and were written politically, and I cann connect to them.

In a way, it's lovely to connect to w men, and to make holiday, and joy, a dancing. Then, in a way, it's very sad to f that you are forced to look for each oth because you may all be destroyed. But y come to it with the strongest part of yo you don't go to it with the weakest part you. If you have to be a warrior, go to with your knowledge, with your physi strength, with your passion, with your lo and maybe, sadly, if need be, with yo hate. 〓

Summer is a Foreign Land. Wayne State University Press, Schauer Publication Fund for Jewish Studies Series. 1966.

Journal/Nocturnal and Seven Stories. Harcourt, Brace and World. 1968.

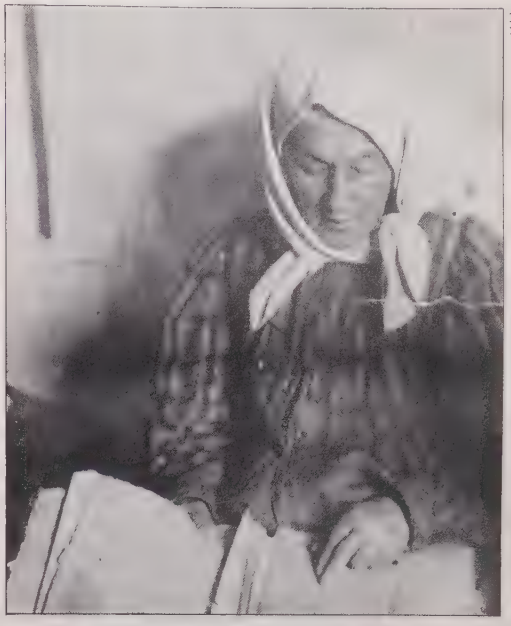
Her Mothers. Holt, Rinehart, Winston. 1975.

The Stolen Legacy (a *haggadah*), with Naomi Nimrod. ©1976.

A Weave of Women. Holt, Rinehart, Winston. Scheduled for publication in May 1978.

This interview, in longer form, was broa cast as part of Windstone's Lesbian-Femir series "That Witches Rising in Ur Ear" KPFA/Pacifica Radio in Berkeley, Augus and 22, 1977.

Tsena Rena*



"Go and see" (Seek enlightenment) is the title of Yiddish-language women's Bible with the portion of week and folk tales. Tsena Rena enabled women educate themselves about the most basic resource he Bible.

rvices for Single Parents

ree New York City Y's have set up ms for single parents: the YM-YWHA ater Flushing in Queens, the Gustave an YM-YWHA in Far Rockaway, and wish Community House of Benson- n Brooklyn.

e Flushing Y's Single Parent Family offers a variety of services for single- families, which comprise more than f the Y's membership, according to l Finkelstein, Center Coordinator. es include individual and group coun- , information and referral services, a clinic, special-interest meetings and sion groups, rap sessions and socials, -child Sunday outings, play groups ildren, and child care.

e Center's Swapshop operates as a g cooperative, and lets parents bring hildren's used clothing and toys, ob- edit for it, and "purchase" new ones he credit.

e Jewish Community House of Ben- rst is now beginning its fifth year of ssions and socials for single parents. g the topics covered in discussions ild support, spouses' visits, and . The Centers can be contacted at:

g YM-YWHA
Kissena Blvd.
g, NY 11355
N 1-3030

Community House of Bensonhurst
ay Parkway
lyn, NY 11214
331-6800

ve Hartman Y
artman La.
ckaway, NY 11691
R 1-0200

Resource Center

A national Jewish women's resource center is now in the planning stages by Nina Cardin in New York. The center will include traditional texts and contemporary feminist publications. Women throughout the country should send Cardin specific information on all available material relating to Jewish women.

Women in the New York area interested in working on the center, particularly those with administrative, library and related skills, should contact:

Nina Cardin
c/o New York Jewish Women's Center
299 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10025
(212) 874-2399

Travel

A 10-day tour to Israel is being sponsored by *Ms.* magazine March 4-14, 1978. The tour will include meetings with feminists and other women who have made an impact on Israeli society through politics, industry, labor, social movements, and the arts, including women in the Knesset (Parliament), officers in the Armed Forces, and Druze and Arab women leaders. Other features include a tour of Jerusalem including Yad Vashem, Mea She'arim and an Absorption Center for new immigrants; the Negev, Masada and Beersheba; the Galilee and Haifa; the Golan Heights; Tel Aviv; Rehovot; a kibbutz—and, of course, free time. For further information contact:

Letty Cottin Pogrebin
Ms. Magazine Dept. T
370 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10017
(212) 725-2666

Money

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture has established a nationwide (U.S.) program of annual grants to individual Jewish artists in the fields of music, theatre, dance, painting, sculpture, belles-lettres, film, television, photography and museums. Grants will range from $5000 to $12,500, depending on artist's circumstances and her/his project's requirements. The program will disburse $250,000 in grants each year for the initial three-year period. The field of entries opens in Spring 1978. For information and application write:

National Foundation for Jewish Culture
122 East 42 St.
New York, NY 10017
(212) 490-2280

Jewish Women in Folk Song

Ruth Rubin, scholar and author of several works on Jewish music, including *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folksong*, is available for performances, discussions or workshops on "The Jewish Woman and her Yiddish Song."

She performs 12-15 songs in order to expose the audience to a variety of the things nineteenth-century Jewish women had to say and sing. Discussion follows her performance. Ms. Rubin is considered unique in her utilization of historical-cultural material as a setting for the songs.

Ruth Rubin
45 Gramercy Park North
New York, NY 10010
(212) 260-3863

Anthology of Fiction and Autobiography

Julia Wolf Mazow is editing an anthology of short fiction and autobiographical selections by American Jewish women writers from 1910 to the present. If you have work you would like to submit for consideration, send it to:

Dr. J. W. Mazow
5202 Rutherglenn
Houston, TX 77096

LILITH MAGAZINE INVITES ARTISTS TO SUBMIT ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TALMUDIC STATEMENT: "WOMEN ARE A NATION UNTO THEMSELVES"
(Shabbat 62A)

Art can be drawing, woodcut or other graphic, painting, montage, batik, wall-hanging, needlework, or any other form of the artist's choosing. Full-page spread or 2-page spread. All art becomes property of Lilith Publications, Inc. to be used at the discretion of the Editorial Board. Full credit will be given as well as a small honorarium. All artwork will be returned to artist in due course. Please make sure name & address is on back of each submission. Receipt will be acknowledged if self-addressed stamped card is enclosed.

The Women's Division of the Jewish Community Federation of Metropolitan New Jersey designed this Jewish feminist symbol which modifies the cross at the bottom of the standard symbol for women, thereby eliminating the suggestion of a crucifix.

Books and Pamphlets

Call Them Builders, by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso. Resource booklet by the first Reconstructionist woman rabbi on Jewish practices and attitudes on birth and family life. Includes music and lists of books and periodicals on the subject. Available for $2.10 (including postage) from:

Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation
432 Park Ave. S.
New York, NY 10016

The Jewish Book Annual for 1977, published by the National Jewish Welfare Board's Jewish Book Council, features an essay on "Recent Literature on Jewish Women," by Blu Greenberg. The essay gives an overview of the major new books on this subject. The *Annual* can be ordered for $10. from:

Jewish Book Council
15 E. 26 St.
New York, NY 10010

In addition to books mentioned in th
tion, the following books of Jewish c
have been received since our last issu

Herstory, by June Sochen. Alfred Pu
ing Co. $10. Most women's history
neglect Jews and Jewish women; th
refers to us occasionally. Very rea
volume.

Rabbi: The American Experience, by
ray Polner. Holt, Rinehart & Wi
$8.95. An interesting overview-essa
votes some pages to women in the rab
and rabbis' wives.

Five Sisters: Women Against the Ts
Barbara A. Engel and Clifford N. F
thal. Schocken Books. $6.95, paper
Women revolutionaries in Russia.

Sarah and After: Five Women of th
Testament, by Lynne Reid Banks. D
day. $6.95. A fictional account of
and the women who followed her.

The Maimie Papers, edited by Ruth
and Sue Davidson. The Feminist Pres
Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe. $6.95 p
$12.50 cloth. The fascinating memoi
letters of a nineteenth-century Jewish
titute, Maimie Pinzer.

Why They Give: American Jews and
Philanthropies, by Milton Goldin. M
lan. $10.95. A history that manages t
all mention of the huge contributio
Jewish women givers and divisions...

Periods of Stress, by Irena Klepfisz. A
volume from an outstanding poet b
Warsaw, focusing on her thoughts,
lems and feelings as a woman reg
war, nature, living alone, relationship
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Books

riday the Rebbetzin... A Feminist Look at ne Rabbi Small series

by Ida Cohen Selavan

day the Rabbi Slept Late, 1964
urday the Rabbi Went Hungry, 1966
nday the Rabbi Stayed Home, 1969
nday the Rabbi Took Off, 1972
sday the Rabbi Saw Red, 1973
dnesday the Rabbi Got Wet, 1976
l Fawcett Crest Paperbacks)
Harry Kemelman

Harry Kemelman's *Friday the Rabbi pt Late* came upon the publishing scene 1964. At subsequent intervals of about o and a half years, Rabbi Small went ngry, stayed home, took off, saw red and wet. Each book has made it to the best-ler lists in hardcover and has been re-nted in paperback to be sold by the mil-ns, and *Friday* has been translated into ner languages.

The Rabbi Small books have had a sig-icance far and beyond what could be ex-cted of a mystery series. All have been re-wed by the most reputable newspapers d magazines (sometimes on the front page *The New York Times Book Review*!), ere much emphasis was placed on the t that Rabbi Small uses Jewish scholar-p in his detective work. For many re-wers and readers it is not the mysteries mselves but their Jewish content and or which have made the books signifi-nt. "The puzzle is a good one but the best rt of this and any Small tale is the won-ous warmth and assurance of the portray-of Jews and Judaism," wrote the reviewer m *The New York Times Book Review*.

After I read *Friday the Rabbi Slept Late* 1965, I, too, wrote an enthusiastic review, blished in the *Pittsburgh Jewish Chroni-*. My last paragraph read:

Rebbetzin Small goes around the house every Sunday picking up, dust-ing, etc. just in case someone drops in. These are aspects of rabbinic life not taught at the seminary. I heartily rec-ommend Friday the Rabbi Slept Late *to lovers of mysteries and/or rabbis.*

. Ida Cohen Selavan is an educator, his-ian, lecturer, translator and author of er 25 publications. She has pioneered in al history in the Pittsburgh Jewish com-nity, where she lives. She became a mys-y fan 35 years ago when she read a story Ellery Queen, with whom she corres-nds.

As I reread my review recently I realized that I was so enthusiastic about the book because I had identified with Rabbi David Small, Jewish Scholar, rather than with Rebbetzin Miriam Small, Jewish Housewife. Now, 12 years after my first review, I have reread all the books to evaluate the treatment of Rebbetzin Small and her role from a Jewish feminist perspective.

The first book, which takes place in 1963, sets the scene for all the succeeding ones. By 1963, Rabbi Small has served the congregation of Barnard's Crossing, an imaginary small town in the Boston area, for almost a year, and the Board of Directors is undecided about whether to renew his contract. Rabbi Small decides a case of negligence in the use of a borrowed car on the basis of Talmudic precedent and acquires some supporters. He then uses his Talmudic methodology to solve a murder of which one of his congregants is a suspect, he makes some more friends, and keeps his job. The subsequent books have similar ingredients: a mystery solved by Talmudic logic, and *tzoris* with the congregation dissolved by mystery's end.

Kemelman tells us a great deal about Rabbi David Small:

•his *yichus* (status based on lineage)—he comes from a long line of rabbis; his grandfather was an Orthodox rabbi in an East European *shtetl* (townlet); his father was a Conservative rabbi in an established synagogue in an American city;

•education—he is a graduate of "the seminary" (obviously the Jewish Theological Seminary, since he is a Conservative rabbi);

•scholarship—in *Friday* he is working on an article on Maimonides; by *Sunday* the article has been published (p. 19), and in *Monday*, David works in Jerusalem on his paper on Ibn Ezra for the *Quarterly* (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, published by Dropsie College?). In Israel, he declares that his Hebrew is good enough to enable him to write for one of the newspapers. (*Monday*, p. 137) But here and there, one may find *lacunae* in his Jewish knowledge. For example, on the El Al plane to Israel he shows ignorance of the difference between "kosher" and "*glatt kosher*" (*Monday*, p. 66).

While the David Small described in *Friday* seems to be as strictly observant of *kashrut* and *Shabbat* as any Orthodox rabbi, by *Saturday*, he is driving on Shabbat (p. 149-50), and in *Monday*, blessing non-kosher wine and challah at the Friday night meal of a secular kibbutz (p. 117).

Ellery Queen can be a 30-year old bachelor for 40 years, but a traditional rabbi cannot be celibate or a swinger. Harry Kemelman therefore created Rebbetzin Miriam Small, helpmeet par excellence. Miriam seems to look a little bit like Gloria Bunker Stivic of *All in the Family*. When we first meet her, in *Friday*, she is a few years younger than the rabbi, who is described as under 30 in 1963:

> *She was tiny and vivacious, with a mass of blonde hair that seemed to overbalance her. She had wide blue eyes and an open frank face that would have seemed ingenuous were they not offset by a firm, determined little chin.* (Friday, *p. 40*)

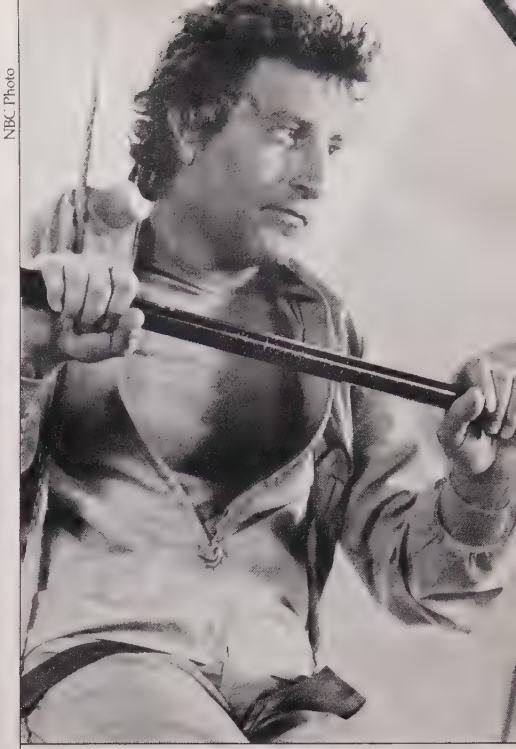
On the first page of *Saturday*, Miriam is described in exactly the same words as in *Friday*. And then Miriam is past 30. After the birth of her first child, Jonathan, she is still

> *.....tiny and vivacious looking...had blue eyes, open countenance, and a firm determined little chin.* (Sunday, *p. 14*)

Pregnant again in *Monday* before they leave Israel, she gives birth to Hepzibah some time in 1973, when she is in her mid-30's. At 35, a mother of two, "she seemed not merely young, but immature." (*Monday*, p. 35) A few years later, she is still

> *.....tiny, with a mass of blonde hair that seemed to overbalance her. She had wide blue eyes that gave her face a schoolgirl ingenuousness, but there was determination in the set of mouth and in the small rounded chin.* (Tuesday, *p. 28*)

She must have gained some weight, for her "firm little chin" has become a "small rounded chin." In 1976, when she is almost 40, her chin is back to what it was before.



NBC Photo

Kemelman's Rabbi Small (Bruce Solomon) becomes a trendy hang glider on TV's "Lanigan's Rabbi," but Mrs. Small is still in his shadow.

She was small, with the trim figure of a young girl. She had wide blue eyes and an open frank face that would have appeared naive were it not for the firm determined chin....Age has not darkened her hair, nor has she changed her hair style. The mass of blonde hair piled on top of her head threatened to come tumbling down about her neck and shoulders.... (Wednesday, *p. 29*)

We know that Miriam is the daughter of a rabbi, that her mother is alive (there is no mention of her father in this connection), and that her mother's sister, Gittel, has been living in Israel since British Mandate times. Miriam knows enough Hebrew to read her prayerbook by rote. In Israel, she either consults a dictionary or has David help her with her shopping lists.

Although Miriam seems to know how to keep a strictly kosher home and how to prepare for Shabbat (*Wednesday*, p. 103) and Passover (*Sunday*, p. 171), David has to explain to her the significance of the number 18—*chai* (life) (*Saturday*, pp. 6-7) and Jewish naming customs (*Saturday*, p. 46). Improbably, this rabbi's daughter is shown to be lacking a solid Hebrew/Jewish education!

Miriam cannot drive a car in *Friday* and is still not driving in *Wednesday*. It is difficult to imagine a middle-class Jewish woman living in a small town who keeps a kosher kitchen and does not drive. (Of course, it is possible that David does the shopping, but Miriam has already pointed out that he is a complete *shlemiel* in the market.)

No mention is ever made of Miriam's secular education; she never seems to talk about literature or art or education or history. She worked as a typist to help put David through school, so it is quite possible that she is not a college graduate.

Kemelman is most lacking in authenticity in this entire area of rebbetzinship. Some of my best friends are rebbetzins—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist—in congregations in small towns and big cities from coast to coast. Only a few of them, notably those who graduated high school during the Depression, did not go to college. Many have master's degrees and some have doctorates. They all have solid Jewish educations, either acquired before they met their husbands, or while they were considering marriage to a rabbi.

Most of my rebbetzin friends of Miriam's age work as Hebrew teachers in their husbands' congregations. Many congregations take for granted this addition to their religious school staff when they hire rabbis. But even after over a dozen years as rebbetzin in Barnard's Crossing, Miriam has not taken an active role in the synagogue or community.

Perhaps this is because Miriam's major role is that of caregiver, and she has been busy nursing and mothering her husband:

"He's like a boy," she said by way of apology. (Friday, *p. 44*)

This may also be the reason that their first child, Jonathan, was born in 1966 when Miriam is 28 or 29—rather late for a traditional Jewish couple married four to five years, especially where the wife has not been working outside the home for years.

Miriam is a "ring around the collar" wife, responsible for her husband's sloppy appearance.

"A wife should see to her husband. But what can I do? I see that his clothes are neat when he leaves in the morning, but can I follow him around all day?" (Friday, *p. 50*)

She had put away the coats that her husband had left draped over the valise.... [She] viewed her husband lying on the couch with affectionate annoyance. "David!" she called sharply. "Sit up."

"I took my shoes off," he protested.

"And how about your jacket? It will be all wrinkled for tonight." (Sunday, *pp. 18-19*)

Miriam is very protective of her husband. When he gets crank calls she intercepts them so he will not be disturbed. (*Friday*, p. 133) She insists that he wear his topcoat (*Friday*, p. 44) or his raincoat (*Wednesday*, p. 65) in bad weather. When he gets sick, she puts him to bed, takes his temperature, gives him orange juice and aspirin, and calls the doctor. (*Saturday*, p. 96) She wishes he would take better care of his health and go for regular checkups. (*Wednesday*, p. 100) She fusses over him "like a mother hen." (*Sunday*, p. 118)

Miriam has been well trained by her mother-in-law. Although she herself has only toast, coffee, and a cigarette for breakfast, David must be properly fed:

"You should see that he eats, Miriam. Don't ask him what he wants, because for him, if he has a book propped up in front of him, or if he has some idea spinning around in his head, he can gnaw on a crust of bread and be satisfied. You've got to see that he eats regular, a balanced diet with lots of vitamins....."

She hovered over him, seeing to it that he finished his grapefruit, setting his cereal down before him with an air that indicated she would brook no refusal. As soon as he had finished the last spoonful, she served his eggs, along with his toast already buttered. The trick was to avoid any delay during which his mind could wander and he would lose interest. (Friday, *p. 55*)

Miriam is still hovering even when pregnant. She prepares the meals and clears away and washes the dishes so "he was able to drink his coffee in peace." (*Saturday*, p. 12).

During one of the bad days of her preg
cy, Miriam is "tired and her feet sw
from the extra housework required to
pare the house for the Sabbath. *Rather*
upset him by suggesting she stay home
asked him if he'd mind if she rode to
temple." (*Saturday, pp. 149-150, emp*
added)

Erev Pesach "the brunt of the work
turally fell on Miriam and this year
even more difficult, because Jonathan
old enough to...get in the way...." (*Sun*
p. 120, italics added) When they decic
go to Israel, Miriam is, of course, in ch
of arrangements:

Miriam, on whose shoulders th
management and logistics of the ex
pedition devolved, had worried an
fretted, had made out lists.... (Mor
day, *p. 63*)

Miriam shows a maternal pride in
"boy-like" husband:

"David will change the world, M
Wasserman, before the world wi
change my David." (Friday, *p. 50*)

"You're an excellent rabbi and a
excellent teacher, too. You have trou
ble with your congregation becaus
you're a good teacher." (Tuesday
pp. 215-16)

David's attitude towards Miriam is
protective and paternal, even patriarc
He makes important decisions about
future, such as sending in a letter of resi
tion, without consulting her, explaining
he does not want to distress her during
pregnancy:

[*Miriam*] *"The point is, that wa*
all right when there were just two o
us. But I'm carrying a child and I fe
responsible for it."

[*David*] *"For* him, *and I'm respor*
sible." (Saturday, *p. 55*)

(Of course, the child turns out to be a
Jonathan.)

But David does not react at all when
riam's obstetrician poo-poos her labor

"The pains have stopped for the tim
being. It's quite common. Sometime
the girls get a little lazy, or mayb
they change their minds. If they didn
they wouldn't be women, ha-ha.
(Saturday, *p. 175*)

Sometimes David shows contempt
Miriam's ignorance:

[*David*] *"We're travelling north.*
[*Miriam*] *"How do you know?"*
[*David*] *"By the sun, of course,*
he replied scornfully. (Wednesday
p. 251)

David admires Miriam's Aunt G
very much. She, like Miriam, is tiny,
with a mass of *gray* hair piled on her h
Says David to Miriam:

"I think she's grand. I don't mind h
managing. She comes from a long lir
of matriarchal managers, all the wa

rom Devorah to Golda. It's a tradi-
on with us. In the shtetl, while the
ien studied, the women ran things
..." He smiled. "You've got a little of
yourself, you know." (Monday,
. 84)

continues to talk nostalgically of *shtetl* in *Tuesday*:

To us, the unmarried woman, the pinster, is a tragic figure because she as not had the chance to complete er normal life cycle.... There were no pinsters in the shtetl." (*p. 265*)

ed, it is the fact that Dean Hanbury is nmarried woman that puts him on her as potential murderer.

David seems not to have acquired any ideas about the role of women in Jewife over the years. In *Tuesday*, when he hes a class on Jewish Thought and Phiphy at a nearby college, probably in fall of 1971, he treats Ms. Goldstein, one is students, with patronizing patience.

He smiled. "And I might add for he benefit of any ardent exponent of Women's Liberation who may be among us, that by rabbinic law, only one born of a Jewish mother—note, nother, not father—is a Jew."

"...isn't that just a line Jewish male hauvinists hand women nowadays o hide their second class status? [Ms. Goldstein said]. Women are brainvashed into thinking they're more important because they're the ones who decide whether the kid belongs to the ewish race or nation or whatever it is ...When actually, wasn't it because with Jews a persecuted minority verywhere, there was greater certainty if you traced descent from the nother?"

"Oh, I see what you mean. Yes, I magine that could be the rationale," he admitted.

A frosty smile flitted across her face. "And isn't it true that women have no place in the Jewish religion down to the present day? In some synagogues they even hide them behind a curtain up in the balcony."

"That's only in strictly Orthodox congregations."

"In our synagogue they sit on one side," Lillian Dushkin said.

"And they're not allowed to take part in the service," Ms. Goldstein added.

"That's not true," said the rabbi. 'The service is a recitation of a series of prayers. Women who attend the service recite the prayers along with the men."

"Big deal," said Lillian Dushkin. 'They're never called up to read or anything."

"They are, in Reform temples," the rabbi corrected her. (Tuesday, *pp. 50-51*)

Apparently, women in Rabbi Small's Conservative shul are neither called up for an *aliyah* (to read or recite blessings on the Torah), counted in a *minyan* (quorum of worshippers) or even allowed to vote:

"...a lot of the girls feel that this fight in the congregation...is not such a good idea."

"Yes, but the girls don't vote."

"Maybe not, [Pearl Jacob said] but a lot of them can influence those who do vote, and in Reform congregations they do vote, and I think it's a good idea...." (Sunday, *p. 120*)

Kemelman may be willing to consider giving women the vote, but he still calls them girls.

The rabbi's—and the author's—limitations are most obvious in the concluding segment of the classroom discussion in *Tuesday*:

"I know for a fact that the husband can divorce the wife by just sending her a letter," said Mark Leventhal.... "And she can't divorce him at all."

"And if her husband dies, she had to marry her brother-in-law," said Mazonson.

The rabbi held up both hands to bring them to order. "This is a very good example," he said, "of the danger of discussions based on ignorance and limited knowledge."

Indeed, these very words may very well apply to the danger of paying attention to Kemelman's teachings based on his own ignorance and limited knowledge, for he ends with David saying:

"No, Ms. Goldstein, I see nothing in the divorce laws that could suggest second-class status for women." (*pp. 50-51*)

The Rabbi David Small books have appealed to a very wide audience and their impact on the Jewish and non-Jewish reader has been enormous. Millions have read these books and have learned painlessly and enjoyably what they believe are authentic Jewish traditions. Some of the material Kemelman is teaching through Rabbi Small is innocuous popularized, somewhat homogenized Judaism. Some of the material is monolithic, possibly derived by Kemelman from his own rabbis. The material relating to women, however, is pernicious.

Rabbi Mezzik, a rival whom some of the congregation are enamored of, gives a detailed rationale for men-only minyans "with no women or children to distract us":

"It isn't an example of male chauvinism. It's as natural as life itself.... It doesn't mean you're a sex maniac if you get a little warm thinking about a woman. That's natural.... But when you're trying to make contact with Him, it gets in the way... The best way is not to have them around.... Now I ask you, is it male chauvinism to admit you think so highly of women that you confess they can distract you from God Himself?" (Wednesday, *p. 118*)

No opposing viewpoint on the issue is given by the author.

Kemelman's presentation of the role of the Jewish woman—for Rebbetzin Miriam Small is the archetypal Jewish woman in many ways—is affectionate, but also patronizing, narrowminded and ignorant. For while the author has shown us Rabbi Small's character and behavior as it develops over a 12-year period—especially in his increased leniency in certain religious observances—Miriam Small remains essentially the same trim-figured, firm-chinned caregiver throughout. While described in the first book as a "shrewd and forceful young woman" (*Friday* p. 40), she has never demonstrated these characteristics in any of the books in the entire series. Nor has she grown and become involved in advanced education or a career, or the community, or in religious or educational innovation or in the Jewish women's movement.

Thus the Jews and Gentiles who are drinking from the wellsprings of Jewish knowledge via David Small's exploits and explications are also, unfortunately, imbibing additives via Miriam Small's lack of a positive Jewish female identity.

Miriam Small's consciousness—and Kemelman's—still remain to be raised.

What about "World of Our Mothers"?

by Barbara Joans

World of Our Fathers, by Irving Howe. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (1976), $14.95; Simon & Schuster (1977), $6.95 (paper)

Irving Howe's *World of our Fathers* is an enormous work. It is immense in design and purpose. It is the story of the East European Jews who migrated to New York's Lower East Side at the turn of the century. He covers their migrations, the early ghetto years, union organizing, socialist commitments, Jewish culture and finally, their attempted assimilation.

He has, however, written an incomplete history. He has left *us* out. Jewish women occupy only a small part of his chronicled world. In a culture where the sexes share so much, Howe shows us very little. We are almost invisible. Howe, apparently, has internalized the American image of woman, backstage companion and appendage to man. Howe's history more closely reflects his beliefs about woman's place than it does the role of Jewish women in history. He has shown us a few stars; we must go in search

Dr. Barbara Joans, feminist anthropologist, co-authored women's studies project Identity Female, *is radical, feminist, Jewish, woman-identified, mother, daughter and wife.*

of the rest. *We* must find our ancestors, our grandmothers, our traditions, for he does not tell us about them. For Irving Howe, the world of the Lower East Side was truly a World of our Fathers.

I started reading, with gladness, this book about Jews, but a few pages in and I began to puzzle, a few more and my feminist hackles began to rise. Howe has done us dirty. Fifteen years ago he would have been excused. Ten years ago he would have been forgiven. Today it is not acceptable to write a lopsided, one-sided sexist history of my people.

I will focus on his major flaws, his most serious defects. These are his perceptions of women in relation to economics, union organizing and the family. Equally important, I will comment on something I call tone, because it is through tone, the use of language, that he stereotypes, trivializes and patronizes women.

Tone, the last of these sexist features, is subtle. It is difficult to discover just what it is that feels so uncomfortable when he discusses women. When he writes about men, the tone is respectful, loaded with praise and full of dignity. A shabby, overworked peddler becomes an individualized hero worthy of human notice and regard. We admire the courage of the peddler's commitments. When he writes about women, his tone becomes folksy, "down-home," full of the minutiae of details. The words change. His references to a woman denigrate through familiarity and false coziness. Howe patronizes her, this immigrant woman with busy hands and swollen ankles and unhealthy pallor, and his language reflects paternalistic attitudes. For example: "If she stayed at home, she learned a little, perhaps a little more than she let on." And "In her bones, she knew." Men had convictions, women held impressions.

Still, beyond tone, there is the linguistic mixing of respect categories and the constant matching of *men* with *girls*. Under the title heading "The Girls and the Men," he discusses women's roles in union organizing. A sweatshop photograph bears the caption, "Girls at the machines in a garment shop," and not one of them looks under thirty. And "A Russian Girl Student"—since a picture is provided, an appropriate title might have been "A Russian Student." But for Howe, male is the rule, so if the subject is not male it must be clearly stated. In describing the "Bintel Brief" (the bundle-of-letters section of the *Daily Forward* Yiddish newspaper) as a column "in which readers, many of them women, wrote about problems" he again patronizes. Try reversing the sexes in the sentence. How absurd to write that many of the readers were male; all *people*, unless otherwise stated, are male.

For some readers this selection of details will appear irrelevant, but it has purpose. Right from the beginning Howe's language conveys meaning and sets the stage for attitudes that will follow throughout the book. Men are people, women are appendages. "If an immigrant wanted to bring *his* wife and children he had to lay out what for him was a small fortune." Since all were immigrants, a slight language change could have reflected the equal immigration position of them both. Howe chose to use the archaic "his wife" form because it best reflects his attitudes about women. Ironically, among Jews more often than not *she* paid the small fortune to bring them to America. It is Howe's tone that allows him later to state, without internal contradiction: "America meant that the sons could find a path such as Jews had never before been able to discover. The fathers would work, grub and scramble as petty agents of primitive accumulation. The sons would acquire education."

Howe acknowledges the existence of women's labor, both in and out of the home, but he underplays its importance. "For the Jewish wife the transition seems to have been a little easier. Having sold herrings in the marketplace of her shtetl, she could sell herring in Orchard Street...." It was common for the husband to be the scholar and the wife the business person, yet he maintains "...on the East Side only a tiny fraction of wives worked full time, though most girls did or tried to." But according to Zborowski and Herzog (*Life With People: Culture of the Shtetl*, 195 the earning of a livelihood was sexless, a the large majority of women participated some gainful occupation if they did carry the chief burden of support. Wom were expected to contribute to the fam income. Woman's crucial economic role further documented by Baum, Hyman a Michel in *The Jewish Woman in Amer* (1976): "Women, in addition to their mestic duties, were accustomed to functi ing as part of a family economic unit, a p tern typical in pre-industrial societies wh husbands rarely earn enough to support entire family....In these societies, wom also customarily shared with their husban the burden of supporting the family, addition to their other responsibiliti What distinguished Jewish women was th sometimes they provided the *sole* suppo of their families while the husbands studi Torah."

Lewis W. Hine

Jewish immigrant women worked at home and in the sweatshops, where they organized the fir

If Howe underestimates women's role economic matters he virtually ignores it union affairs. Jews helped build the N York labor unions. The needle trad (ILGWU) and the bakers' and painte unions were all created with Jewish sw and Jewish blood. Men and women stru gled for labor unity. Howe highlights c heroes in mentioning Rose Schneiderm

Clara Lemlich, but nowhere does he de- the importance of the rank and file. He forgotten. Other authors, however, e not. The *Proceedings of the Academy olitical Science of the City of New York* 0), chronicled the shirtwaist-makers e of 1908: "The men strikers were in- dated and lost heart, but the women ied on the picketing, suffering arrest abuse from the police and the guards, aged by the manufacturers." This gen- strike, called by many the women's e, had sixty men and ninety women on picket lines. Lewis Levine, in a *History* ne ILGWU, credits victory to the wom- They struck for a shortened work week, round labor and fixed wages.

Later, "Jewish women were the movers shakers behind the 'uprising of the 00,' the largest strike by women in the ed States up to that time." Women e active, they were the doers, they were ne movers on all levels. These Jewish nen abounded with high energy and hot ngth. They organized, they hustled, led strikes. Howe does not remind us, Baxandall, Gordon and Reverby do, in erica's *Working Women: A Documen- History—1600 to the Present* (1976). In 2 Jewish immigrant women in New k organized a boycott of the kosher t butchers. They closed the shops and anded lower prices. "Several of the nen leaders of the mob laughed at the of the men in doing damage...the nen threw bottles, stones and whatever could place their hands on at the police- ...All that the police could do was to st four women who were charged with g ringleaders of the mob."

Howe recounts the deeds of thousands nen, but only a handful of women. The nding of Hadassah gets one sentence; ie America, head of the National Coun- f Jewish Women, gets none. Howe men- s a few stars, but we need the history of ur foremothers. It's in the archives, it's umented in the libraries, it's recorded in papers and city halls. It was available his social history. In Jewish life where nen worked, organized, created, struck were part of the open marketplace, ve's neglect is anything but benign.

If Howe underestimates the importance vomen's impact on economics, unioniza- and labor, he totally misunderstands position of single women. When he ex- nes the life of Lillian Wald, founder of Henry Street Settlement House, he es: "By some later perspectives, Lillian ld missed a good deal in life. She never ried, she seemed to have no intense per- al relationships, she yielded her emo- s to all about her, she showed small in- ation toward self-scrutiny or introspec- ." In Howe's world, an unmarried nan would have had to have missed a t deal in life. It seems inconceivable to that she might have actually been quite

N.Y. Public Library

Women of all ages closed ranks during a strike.

happy and enjoyed her position. Compare his treatment of single women with that of Baum, Hyman and Michel: "Most of the Jewish women who remained single and part of the labor movement led rich lives, despite (or because of?) the absence of a long term male relationship...They managed to set up a community of their own that offered some satisfactions. There is evidence too, that a small number of Jewish women in the labor movement became involved in same-sex relationships, some of which lasted a lifetime. Men were not central to their lives, the union was."

If he overlooks Jewish women on the picket line and almost ignores them in the union halls, he cannot escape their presence and impact on the family. He acknowledges that "...the mother often becomes the emotional center of the family." Here we meet, at last, the Jewish mother. Here sits the woman who occupies center stage in her own domain. Here is the woman who clothes, feeds, washes, patches and repairs the bodies, psyches, hearts and souls of her offspring. And how is she treated in the book? With patronizing respect and pulsating fear. He respects her ability to keep the family together. He fears her strength, her drive and her power.

Howe is afraid of this Jewish woman. He writes: "...that one crucial result of migration was that changes in Jewish family life often led to a flow of power towards the mother. If she often used this power with legendary selflessness, it could also seize her like a dybbuk, transforming her into the brassy-voiced, smothering and shrewish momma upon whom generations of unsettled sons would blame everything from intellectual sterility to sexual incompetence."

Howe becomes more specific. "Time brought changes. Learning to relish the privilege of suffering, the Jewish mother could become absurdly, outrageously protective. From that condition, especially if linked, as it well might be, with contempt for her husband, she could decline into a brassy scourge, with her grating bark and soul-destroying whine, silver-blue hair and unfocused aggression." Nowhere does Howe explain how she learns to relish the *privilege of suffering* or why she would develop contempt for her husband. His image of her brassyness, though, comes through very clearly. We see her through his eyes, with his distaste for her loud voice and brassy tongue, and his fear of her abrasive and assertive manner. The Jewish mother conflicts with the popular American image of passive femininity. She is not the stereotype of the American woman, soft-spoken and reticent. Howe's Jewish mother suffers from not living up to the Jewish man's "all-American girl" image. She is not demure; she is not retiring. The loud, assertive Jewish mother is ultimately being condemned for her ethnicity. It is her non-Americanism which Jewish men, apparently, cannot abide.

In a pathetic attempt at explanation for her perceived shrewishness, Howe turns apologist. "Yet even behind the most insufferable ways of the Jewish mother there was almost always a hard-earned perception of reality." She was there to keep the family safe. "...Later, such memories (the dangers faced by Jewish children) would fade among those she had meant to shield and it would become customary to regard her as a grotesque figure of excess. Venerated to absurdity, assaulted with a venom that testifies obliquely to her continuing moral and emotional power, the immigrant mother cut her path through the perils and entanglements of American life." It is a final irony that a book that devotes so few of its 694 pages to women should focus most of its female coverage on the stereotypic destructive force of the Jewish mother. Without documentation, Howe vilifies her in a manner reminiscent of Phillip Wiley's *Generation of Vipers*. She must have been sufficiently outside the feminized American norm to have created such fear in her assimilated sons.

I have focused on the major sexist faults of the book. As feminists we can no longer permit sexism to go unchallenged. We have our own history to rediscover and our own world-view to put forward. With these warnings, Howe's book should, of course, be read. He has written an epic, a colossus, a blockbuster of a book. I have concentrated upon the defects, but his efforts, his depth and his scope must be appreciated. He tries to chronicle almost a hundred years of Jewish-American history. In spite of sexist shortsightedness it is still an immense challenge and a grand attempt. It is a book I will give to my father.

Lucy Dawidowicz's Contempt for Her Own Sex

by Susannah Heschel

The Jewish Presence: Essays in Identity and History, by Lucy Dawidowicz. Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1977), $12.95

It is unclear why Lucy Dawidowicz's most recent book—*The Jewish Presence: Essays on Identity and History*—was ever published. The book is a collection of her essays which had already appeared in magazines such as *Commentary* and *Midstream* during the 1950's and '60's. While Dawidowicz's field is Jewish history, these essays show no particular insight into problems of Jewish identity, but are simply vehicles for her own opinions and prejudices. These prejudices are most blatant in the essay "On Being a Woman in Shul," where she insists that synagogues be the exclusive domain of men. Although she is writing about the struggle for Jewish identity, she fails to recognize that the Jewish women's movement is an important manifestation of this struggle.

This lack of understanding is especially disturbing because Dawidowicz is one of the first women to become a first-rate scholar of Jewish history. She has won several awards for her major work, *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945*, and holds a chair in Holocaust Studies at Yeshiva University. She has also received prestigious fellowships, such as the Guggenheim, to study American Jewish history, and has published an anthology of memoirs on East European Jewish life, *The Golden Tradition*. Perhaps no other woman in Jewish Studies has achieved such recognition and acclaim.

The essays in her new book range in topic from Yiddish language and culture to Nazism to middle-class American Judaism. The essays vary in quality, but are written in a clear and easy style. The essays on Nazism are brief but interesting footnotes to her lengthy history of the Holocaust. The essay on "Resistance: A Doomed Struggle" outlines the history of Jewish resistance in Eastern Europe during the German occupation. In another essay, "Can Anti-Semitism be Measured?" she criticizes the biases in sociological surveys measuring anti-Semitism and racism. But the lack of objectivity she finds in these studies can be found in Dawidowicz's own work.

Dawidowicz defines women's role in the synagogue traditionally, and does not want to see any changes made. She is content to remain behind the *mechitzah* (the physical barrier between men's and women's sections in an Orthodox synagogue) because she believes that men and women "are more intent on the liturgy" when separated. She states explicitly that "Judaism is a man's religion not only in substance and in practice but also in its symbolic theology" (p. 50). Permitting men and women to sit together was "the classic compromise" in American Jewry that transformed Orthodoxy to Conservative Judaism—a move Dawidowicz scorns and attributes to the weakening of Jewish identity.

Dawidowicz predicts two possible results if women are granted total equality in the synagogue: either "Italianization" or "Hadassah-ization." She writes:

Women, when passive, can turn the synagogue into something like a provincial Italian Catholic church. The rabbi assumes all sacerdotal functions: the women become his dutiful parishioners whose religion is part devotion, part ignorance, and part superstition. Religion, then, becomes a womanish thing. Men stay away out of contempt. But even more forbidding—to me at least—is the threat of female power, female usurpation of the synagogue. Women are efficient; they can organize, raise funds, bring order out of chaos. They can turn the shul into a Hadassah chapter. Not that I disapprove of Hadassah, its activities, or its ladies. But I do not like the idea of their taking over the synagogue. To my mind, the assumption by a woman of a rabbinic or priestly function in the synagogue undermines the very essence of Jewish tradition. To say that the "Jewish women's movement" is inherently antitraditionalist and implicitly antinomian is only to speak tautologically. (pp. 52-53)

At no time does Dawidowicz consider that women have strong and serious religious commitments. While in other essays she examines all the subtleties of anti-Semitism and its destructiveness, in this essay she is oblivious to the potential damage of her remarks about women. It is no more correct to caricature women as passive peasants or aggressive usurpers than it is to portray Jews as controllers of the world's economy.

While most arguments against women's full participation in synagogue services are based on *halachah* (Jewish law), Dawidowicz's opposition is perhaps more insidious. Hers is a classic example of prejudice, based entirely on her personal feelings. For example, when she sees women at a Reconstructionist synagogue dancing with a Torah scroll on Simchat Torah:

Watching these women embrace the Torah, I found myself seized by wicked and perverse thoughts. Wicked: how insensible was this movement to the festival's symbolism, to its music and poetry. Perverse: only here could transvestitism appear as innocent farce. (p.52)

According to Dawidowicz, wo
should not embrace a Torah scroll bec
the Torah is a feminine symbol in the Je
mystical system. If the Torah is female,
argues, it should be embraced only by n
There is no attempt at historical metho
her argument, no recognition that the n
tical system was developed by men—
not women—for a small group of follow
Moreover, what rationale can change n
tical symbols into laws governing a
man's role in the synagogue? But the a
ment is really specious. Men who lov
God who is always represented in mascu
imagery cannot be accused of homosex
ity, so why should a woman who hol
Torah scroll, which is represented in fe
nine imagery, be accused of transvesti

It is ironic that Dawidowicz, herself
of the first and foremost female Jewish
torians, should be so contemptuous of
potentialities of other women. She wr
"In Judaism, women are assigned prim
at home, not in shul, and despite the
formers, this traditional religious role
women seems appropriate also biologic
and sociologically active" (p. 53). Yet
widowicz has not limited herself to a ro
the home, and would certainly resent
suggestion that women are functionally
capable of academic success.

Susannah Heschel is a graduate student in modern Jewish philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Film

Hollywood Waters own "Rose Garden"

by Rochelle Lefkowitz

A funny thing happened to the young sh heroine of *I Never Promised You A e Garden* on the road to Hollywood. current film of this classic novel about a zophrenic teenager completely elimina- 6-year-old Deborah Blau's Jewish iden- Somewhere en route to the silver en, Jewish Deborah Blau became ethni- -neutered Deborah Blake.

n her powerful, semi-autobiographical el, author Joanne Greenberg (alias Han- Green) depicted anti-Semitism at the of the young woman's schizophrenia. e novel, Deborah Blau, the lone Jew in ffluent Midwest neighborhood, was the et of vicious anti-Semitism at school and mer camp for years. By the time a camp nselor told her that "Hitler was getting of the garbage people," Deborah had called a dirty Jew enough to cherish remark as fuel for the self-hatred at the of her illness.

n the novel, the cruel gods of Deborah's ginary world echo that anti-Semitism, stantly reminding her that "You were er one of them, You are not of them. are wholly different." But the film robs e same refrains of their source. Neither tized-for-celluloid Deborah Blake—nor family—are Jewish.

n a real "gentlemen's agreement," Hol- ood erased the Jewish ethnicity so cru- to the novel. It thus deprived Jewish nen—and the American movie audi- s—of a valuable window into the Jew- experience. The anguish of Deborah is but a heightened version of the cul- schizophrenia that haunts the lives of Jewish women—and men—in rica.

chelle Lefkowitz 1977

nelle Lefkowitz is a founder and editor ster Courage, a feminist news journal he Boston area.

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age 42—Lewis W. Hine, "Homework Garters," 1910. Courtesy of the International Museum of Photography, chester, N.Y.
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(**Letters**–*Contd. from Page 6*)

"...too much space in a women's magazine has been devoted to understanding the man's position."

Ladies:

My birth certificate does not admit me to "the world of the Jewish woman", but I don't consider it intellectually honest to figure out my religious beliefs without hearing from that world; and, meanwhile, maybe I can be warned against some male chauvinist behavior which I might otherwise have thoughtlessly committed, or maybe I can write to the editor of another publication about one of the more grievous "Oy! Vey!"s (as I did to the *Jerusalem Post* about the campaign against women bus drivers).

Speaking of oy-veys, have you heard this one about *aliyot* in the synagogue? I heard a man tell a woman that her sense of Jewishness must be pretty weak if it depended on getting 50% of the ritual honors for women—evidently not noticing that, by the same logic, *his* sense of Jewishness must be twice as weak if it depended on getting 100% of the honors for men.

Please note that I'm "giving him the business" not because he insisted on attending services led only by men—which he might have done for fear of being distracted—but, rather, because, after it was brought to his attention that some women felt excluded, he continued to so insist *and*, apparently, did not intend to do anything (either by giving money or by using such influence as he had on his congregation) to promote the existence of a place where services would be led by women.

Alan R. Brown
New York NY

Dear Friends:

Since your first issue, I have been pleasantly rewarded with new-found knowledge about my religion and my place, as a single Jewish woman. I would like to share this pleasure with my close friend, and have enclosed a check to cover her subscription to this magazine. Thank you so much for the opportunity to share and express with other women our plight in the community. I'm sure my friend will enjoy your magazine, as much as I have.

Cheryl Rabin
Memphis TN

To Whom it may concern:

Many compliments on a thought-provoking publication! Enjoyed it so much, can hardly wait for the next issue! Once again, keep up the good work, it is truly appreciated.

Bonnie Horberg
Library Collective, Women's Center
Storrs CT

Dear Editors:

The increased assertiveness and p
pation of women in Jewish involv
and activities and the removal of a
restrictions against participation of w
indicates to me, a very important st
our Jewish history. I am enclosing a
subscription for my grandmother.

Mr. Jackie Fe
Amsterdam, H

Dear People,

I have just read Blu Greenberg's ir
ative article, "Jewish Divorce Law" (
No. 3). My ex-husband and I went f
get at the Jewish Theological Semin
New York. At the close of the cere
the scribe intoned something to the
that no one had the right to questi
validity of the divorce. I am told, hov
that an Orthodox Jew would still co
me an "*ayshet ish*" (married woma
cause the rabbinic court was not com
of Orthodox rabbis. Am I or am I n
"*ayshet ish*" in the eyes of the Ort
community?

Naomi B. Sl
N. Miami Be

Blu Greenberg replies:

It is difficult to answer your qu
because the *halachic* issue is cloude
somewhat by "politics" between the
ent religious movements. Accordin
spokesrabbi for the (Orthodox) Rabb
Council of America, their *bet-din*
court) examines every *get* individual
accepts a "Conservative" *get* if it ha
the traditional *halachic* standards.

As a matter of general policy, the
Rabbinate (Orthodox) does not rec
gittin (pl. of *get*) of Conservative rab
actual fact, however, the Israeli *ba*
(pl. of *bet-din*) have accepted many
gittin where they felt that the proc
and execution were *halachically* corre
reliable. I would guess, therefore, th
Seminary *bet-din* would qualify, an
you would not be considered an *ays*
if you wanted to be married again
Orthodox community.

An example of how *halachah* an
tics are intertwined: Both in America
Israel, the Orthodox *bet-din* will of
write a Conservative *get* where it is p
to do so, i.e., where the ex-husban
wife are accessible and willing to go th
the procedures again. If this is not p
to arrange, then the *bet-din* will acce
Conservative *get*. The rationale here
it is better to use a Conservative *get* t
create an *agunah* (anchored wife) situ
One can easily see the positive and ne
implications of such a position. Your
tion again highlights why we need a d
formula acceptable to and recognized
Jews.

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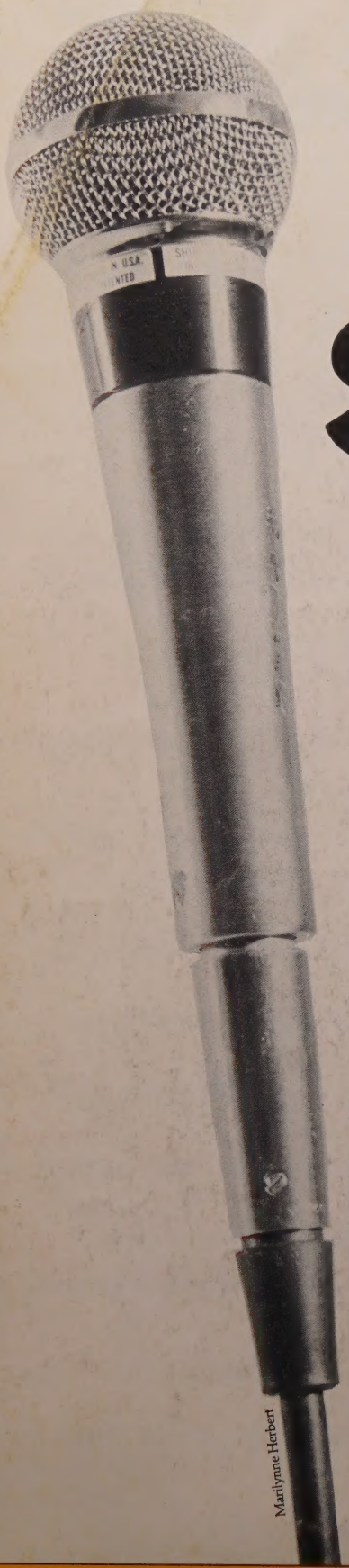

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